

# CYNOSURE

## FINAL REPORT

**TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR THE  
“Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity  
Conservation into Government Policy and Private  
Sector Practice: Piloting Sustainability Models to  
Take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
(CEPF) to Scale” Program**

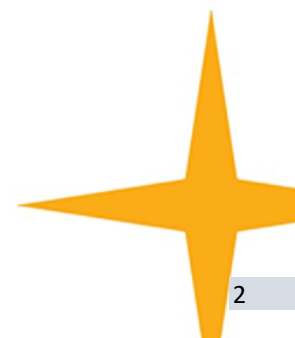
## SUBMITTED TO

## CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

11 August 2022

# PROJECT DATA SHEET

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy and Private Sector Practice: Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale</b>
<b>GEF Project ID</b>	5735
<b>GEF Financing</b>	USD 10,000,000
<b>Planned Co-financing</b>	USD 84,500,000
<b>Co-Financing Materialized as of MTR (31 December 2021)</b>	USD 84,632,944
<b>Key Objectives</b>	To demonstrate innovative tools, methodologies and investments, and build related capacities, through which civil society in three pilot biodiversity hotspots, in partnership with public and private sector actors, can cost effectively conserve biodiversity and progress towards long-term institutional sustainability, and to replicate demonstrated approaches in nine additional hotspots.
<b>GEF Agency</b>	Conservation International (CI)
<b>Project Country</b>	Global
<b>Executing Agencies</b>	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
<b>Pro-Doc Submission Date</b>	28 January 2016
<b>Date of CEO Endorsement/Approval</b>	03 March 2016
<b>Actual Start Date</b>	01 April 2016
<b>Planned End Date</b>	31 March 2021
<b>Actual Project End Date</b>	31 July 2022



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

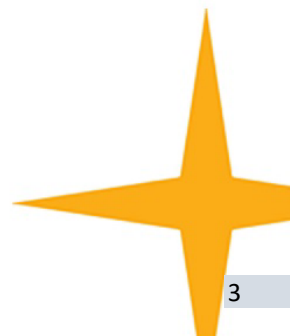
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*Cynosure International, Inc.* would like to thank all the individuals and institutions whose cooperation made this report possible.

The terminal evaluation was supported by **Conservation International (CI)** and **CEPF**. Our special thanks are due to CI GEF Program Manager / Vice President, Project Development and Impact – Mr. Free de Koning; Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation, GEF Project Agency and GCF Implementing Agency – Mr. Rocky (Aki) Marcelino; Managing Director, CEPF – Mr. Jack Tordoff; Grant Director, EAM, CEPF – Mr. Dan Rothberg; Grant Director, Cerrado, CEPF, – Ms. Peggy Poncelet; and Senior Director of Monitoring, Evaluation and Outreach, CEPF – Ms. Nina Marshall for their support and valuable insights at all stages of the evaluation.

The Terminal Evaluation Team would also like to express their sincere gratitude to the RIT Leaders – Mr. Michael Becker (IEB), Ms. Maaïke Manten (BirdLife), and Dr. Scott Perkin (IUCN ARO) – for their valuable insights and support during the in-country data collection activities.

We are immensely obliged to the individual grantees, and all the other interviewed stakeholders who shared their invaluable knowledge, experience, and challenges and offered their perspectives and advice.



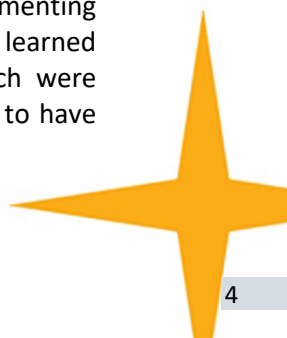
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ‘*Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainable Models to Take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)*’ Program was launched in April 2016 as a full-sized 60 months (05 year) project for implementation in three biodiversity hotspots: the Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane, and Indo-Burma hotspots. With the CI-GEF Agency as the Implementing Agency (IA), the project was executed by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) as the Executing Agency (EA) and with the Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil (IEB), BirdLife International, the IUCN ARO acting in the capacity of executing partners of the CEPF, as the Regional Implementation Teams (RITs), in the Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane, and Indo-Burma hotspots, respectively. The overall objective of the project was to demonstrate innovative, tools, methodologies and investments, replicate demonstrated approaches in additional hotspots, and build related capacities through which civil society in the three pilot biodiversity hotspots could cost-effectively conserve biodiversity and progress towards long-term institutional sustainability. The project was financed by a full-sized GEF grant of USD 9.8 million and with a total of USD 84.5 million in co-financing from six major donors. The project originally planned to conclude by March 2021, but received two no-cost extensions for a total of 16-month period and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.

The objective of the terminal evaluation (TE) is to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project by assessing its design, implementation, and achievement of objectives. To that end, the scope of the current evaluation assessed the project implementation activities from its inception in April 2016 to its conclusion in March 2022. The TE from undertaken from April 2022 to June 2022, adopting a consultative and participatory approach and employing mixed methodologies by combining qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary sources.

The TE Team found that the project was **Highly Relevant** to the various goals and needs of key stakeholders at the institutional, local, national, and global levels through its alignment with key global and national priorities and action plans. At the global level, the project was found to be fully aligned with the goals of the *Convention on Biological Diversity* and with its Strategic Plan. At the national levels, the project was found to have significant alignment with a range of national and regional strategies, including the *National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans*. At the institutional level, the project was found to be consistent with the *GEF-5 Focal Area Objectives 1 and 2* of the Biodiversity focal area. Lastly, at the local level, the project was particularly relevant and highly aligned with the needs and interests of local civil society as well as indigenous and women groups through its provision of direct grant funding as well as capacity building support to the former through which the latter benefit through increased gender-equitable access to ecosystem services.

A review of the project strategy and design revealed that the current project built on significant previous experience of the CEPF, working in partnership with Conservation International and the GEF, in implementing Phases I and II of its Strategic Framework. The current project itself was a product of the CEPF’s Phase III Strategy, which, in turn, was developed, based on lessons learned from the implementation of its earlier two phases. The current project aimed to pilot certain elements of its Phase III strategy by shifting the CEPF, and its partners, towards long-term strategic thinking and implementation, namely through the development of long-term visions for the hotspots it is engaged in and the introduction of long-term implementation structures who would be custodians of implementing the long-term visions. The TE revealed that the project design was sound and based on lessons learned from the implementation of the previous Phases of the CEPF’s Strategic Frameworks which were translated well into the current project strategy and design. Moreover, the project was found to have

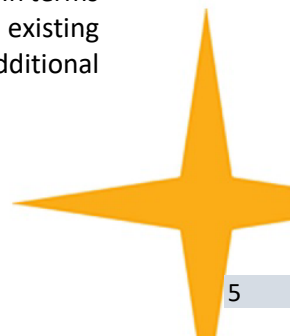


sufficient flexibility built into its design to allow space and room to adapt to different contexts across the three target hotspots. To illustrate, the project shifted its focus to a subset of the Eastern Afromontane hotspot (the Albertine Rift and the Eastern Arc Mountains) in light of socio-political unrest and conflict in other parts of the hotspot. Similarly, in the Cerrado hotspot, the project raised the maximum value for small grants to attract the interests of civil society operating in the hotspot. In the case of the Cerrado, the TE found that the project suffered from early challenges in the form of lack of an effective entry strategy due to which the quality of initial proposals received was lower due to insufficient socialization of CEPF's aims and objectives among civil society actors. The project's results framework was found to provide sufficient monitoring guidance and planning through its use of SMART indicators with well-integration of gender mainstreaming and safeguards into project design as well as the results framework.

With regards to the project's **implementation and adaptive management**, the TE Team ascertained that the CI-GEF Agency, as the IA, has been delivering on its responsibilities in a diligent and timely manner and according to the tasks assigned to it in the project design document which include reviewing and approving annual procurement plans, associated budgets, quarterly technical and financial reports, annual project implementation reports. In addition, the CI-GEF successfully undertook three monitoring field missions, one in each of the target hotspots. Consequently, the **Quality of Supervision and Implementation by CI-GEF** was deemed **Satisfactory**. In terms of the project's execution, a two-tiered execution arrangement was implemented for the contracting, management, and execution of grants with larger grantees contracted and managed directly by the CEPF Secretariat while smaller grantees were contracted and managed by the RITs in each hotspot. The use of RITs based in their respective hotspots enabled the project to successfully coordinate and manage local civil society organizations as the RITs were deemed to have the necessary mobility and knowledge of local contexts that a removed CEPF may not have readily access to. The TE Team found that staffing at the CEPF has been adequate and consistent over the implementation of the project with most of the senior staff engaged in the project from its inception to its conclusion. At the RIT-level, various staffing modalities were observed with the IEB in Cerrado facing initial challenges in the form of a very lean staffing structure and limited staffing. While at the IUCN ARO, staffing was more commensurate with the number of countries within the Indo-Burma hotspot where the project was operational. Therefore, the project's execution arrangements and **Quality of Execution** were found to be **Satisfactory**.

The project-level monitoring systems were established at three main levels: at the level of CI-GEF which was responsible for conducting monitoring field missions; at the level of CEPF which was responsible for ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation activities were carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and at the level of the RIT which administered M&E tools to its grantees and collected and reported on data obtained from grantees. The project relied on two main M&E tools for tracking progress against key outcome-level indicators pertaining to grantees' organizational capacities (Civil Society Tracking Tool and Gender Tracking Tool) which were self-assessments administered to grantees at the start and end of their grant duration. Despite the use of additional verification measures for the validation of grantees' responses to the assessments, the TE found methodological challenges encountered by the RIT in the form of reliability issues and responder bias for which additional ad-hoc verification measures were utilized in some cases. Overall, the project's M&E was considered **Satisfactory** at design and **Satisfactory** during implementation due to the use of various verification measures to validate data provided by grantees throughout implementation.

Against the total GEF grant of USD 9.8 million, the project has expended USD 9.77 million (99.7%). In terms of co-financing, the project has been highly successful in garnering significant co-financing from existing and new sources, thereby exceeding its planned co-financing amount of USD 84.5 million, by an additional 16%, bringing the total co-financing amount materialized to USD 97.69 million.



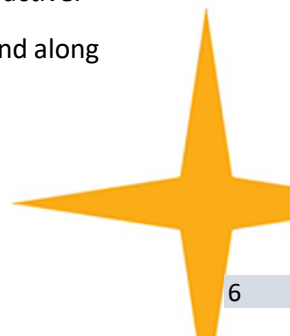
With regards to **progress towards results**, the project successfully delivered on **Outcome 1.1** as well as the 04 Outputs associated with it by developing long-term visions for each of the three hotspots containing graduation targets for civil society, associated financing plans, targets for policy demonstration, and targets for private sector engagement. Moreover, the project was successful in receiving a total of 46 endorsements for the developed long-term visions against an overall target of 10 endorsements despite the long-term visions for the Indo-Burma and EAM hotspots receiving disproportionately fewer endorsements compared to that of the Cerrado hotspot. While the long-term visions were considered more relevant for the CEPF and the RITs tasked with stewarding their implementation, their relevance to other donors as well as civil society organizations was found to be relatively more limited.

On **Outcome 2.1**, the project was successful in contracting RITs in each of the three hotspots for the duration of the project and was successful in transitioning one of the RITs, IUCN ARO (Indo-Burma) into a long-term implementation structure. In addition, there is a high likelihood of the IEB (Cerrado) receiving USD 1.8 million under GEF-7 STAR allocation which would enable it to continue being a long-term implementation structure for the hotspot. Moreover, the RITs were successful in providing significant support to the grantees throughout the implementation of the project. However, the sheer number of grantees, particularly those with lesser capacities, spread the RITs' resources thin and reduced the efficiency of the project. Lastly, while at the collective level, all hotspots exceeded targets for achieving improvement in civil society capacity and grantees' gender mainstreaming capacities, the project only partially met its targets on the number of local grantees who showed improvements in CSTT scores of 10% or more. Under **Outcome 2.2**, the project successfully developed regional resource mobilization strategies for each of the three hotspots. In addition, the project successfully managed to raise the target amount of additional funds in sustainable financing mechanisms on an aggregate level even if it was unable to achieve the disaggregated targets for non-traditional sources and private sector models. Lastly, the project also successfully demonstrated 03 innovative models for private sector conservation finance, overachieving on the targets by 50%.

Under **Outcome 3.1**, the project was highly successful in meeting and, in most cases, over-achieving its targets for influencing public sector policies, introducing biodiversity-friendly practices in the private sector, and introducing new management models in protected areas across the biodiversity hotspots. However, the TE team observed that the impact generated from influencing public sector policies and introducing biodiversity-friendly practices was more localized and limited in its scope as the project was constrained in its resources, timeframe, and approach to undertake the necessary engagement and relationship building required to affect policies at a larger scale as well as to influence larger private sector players in the key sectors.

For **Outcome 4.1**, the project was found to have achieved its targets for replicating successful policy demonstration models and best management practices from the pilot hotspots to additional hotspots. While the project made progress towards establishing long-term implementation structures and developing regional resource mobilization strategies in other hotspots, it fell short of meeting its established targets, primarily as a result of shifting donor priorities and the global economic downturn brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under Outcome 4.2, the project was successful in developing 06 knowledge products, including one pertaining to Indigenous Peoples and Gender Mainstreaming each. In addition, three of the models, tools, or best practices developed under the project were adopted by conservation practitioners in areas outside the biodiversity hotspots where the CEPF is currently active.

In line with TE Guidelines, the following outcome ratings are provided for each outcome overall and along the dimensions of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

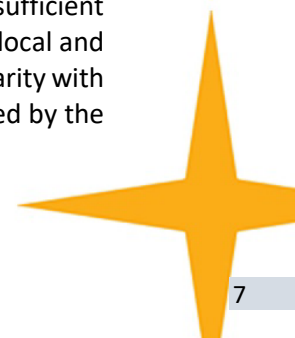


Outcome	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Overall Rating
Outcome 1.1	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Outcome 2.1	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Outcome 2.2	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Outcome 3.1	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	<b>Highly Satisfactory</b>
Outcome 4.1	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	<b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
Outcome 4.2	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	<b>Satisfactory</b>

While the project has instituted 01 long-term implementation structure (IUCN ARO in Indo-Burma) by the project’s conclusion, there is a likelihood that the IEB (RIT in Cerrado) will receive additional funding in the form of USD 1.8 million through the GEF-7 STAR allocation which would enable it to continue stewarding the long-term vision of the CEPF and endorsees in the Cerrado. Furthermore, the CEPF has continued the institution of long-term implementation structures in other hotspots even after the project’s conclusion, albeit at a reduced pace. Moreover, the TE also found evidence of the grantees utilizing the experience of implementing a CEPF grant and benefiting from the capacity building support provided by the project to source additional funding to expand their operation, scale up current projects and build on the work undertaken through CEPF funding. Furthermore, there is strong interest among existing donors to continue supporting the CEPF in its future endeavors. However, to a certain extent the continuation of the establishment of these long-term implementation structures, in line with the CEPF Phase III Strategic Framework, is contingent on factors beyond the project’s control such as the global economic climate and priorities of donors. In light of these factors, the project’s **Sustainability** in terms of financial and institutional factors was found to be **Moderately Satisfactory**. The project’s sustainability in terms of socio-economic factors was found to be Likely given the project was successfully able to lower risks posed by socio-economic and political factors by shifting its strategy in the case of the former. In the case of environmental factors, the risks posed by climate change and other environmental factors were deemed low and are expected to be gradual over time. Therefore, the project’s sustainability in terms of socio-economic and political factors as well as environmental factors was considered **Likely**.

Overall, the project revealed significant **impact** at the institutional level, species conservation level, production landscapes level, and the community level. At the institutional level, the project was successful in increasing capacities of the RITs and civil society across the three hotspots. The project also achieved impact in terms of high-level biodiversity conservation by reducing the threats to threatened species, increasing the number of land under effective biodiversity mainstreaming, and introducing new management models in protected areas across the pilot hotspots. At the community level, the project also directly and indirectly benefitted men and women in local and indigenous communities by providing increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services. However, the results have been varied across the hotspots. A possible explanation for this could be different approaches used in overall portfolio management in each of the three hotspots as well as the contextual differences in socio-economic, geographic, political, and administrative aspects. Therefore, the TE revealed the need for a systematic impact assessment across the project’s portfolio to examine the differences in the approaches used in developing portfolio of projects across the three hotspots to uncover learnings on effective context-specific strategies and approaches.

The TE Team found that the CEPF was well-positioned as the Executing Agency to ensure the successful implementation of the **environment and social safeguards**, particularly because of being established through a partnership with the World Bank, GEF, and Conservation International, thereby having sufficient experience in this area. Among the grantees, the reception of safeguards was more mixed with local and small grantees expressing confusion regarding the purpose of the safeguards along with unfamiliarity with CI-GEF and CEPF processes. However, the capacity building support along with guidance provided by the

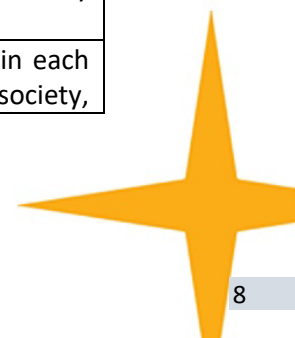


RITs was found to facilitate these grantees understanding regarding incorporating safeguards into the design of their projects, implementing them, and monitoring them. Nevertheless, the RITs highlighted the need to simplify and streamline safeguards in the context of administrating small grants for short implementation durations to small organizations, often lacking the necessary organizational capacity and infrastructure, and making them fit for purpose. The CEPF project triggered five major safeguard policies, ratings for which are provided in the table below.

Safeguard Policy	Rating	Justification
<b>Gender Mainstreaming Plan</b>	Satisfactory	The GMP established indicators for measuring the participation of women throughout the project's implementation through engagements, direct benefits for women and men through the grantees' projects, and inclusion of gender considerations into the strategies, plans, and policies developed under the project. In addition, gender was effectively mainstreamed across the projects results framework.
<b>Stakeholder Engagement Plan</b>	Satisfactory	Though no targets were set, there has been significant stakeholder engagement throughout the project's duration in the form of 11 major engagements, lessons dissemination workshops across the three hotspots. Moreover, the project has benefitted 176 civil society organizations with trainings provided to a total of 12,111 women and 15,614 men. Stakeholder engagement was also successful in garnering a total of 46 endorsements for the three long-term visions developed under this project.
<b>Accountability and Grievance Mechanism</b>	Satisfactory	The project instituted an AGM where the grantee was the first point of contact, with the RIT and CEPF responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the AGM and resolving grievances not resolved at the grantee level. Overall, the project received only one grievance during FY19 which was successfully resolved and no other grievances were received. However, the TE noted that the indicators associated with the AGM do not measure the extent to which information on the project's AGM was disseminated by the grantees to the beneficiaries and local communities engaged over the course of implementation.
<b>Involuntary Resettlement</b>	Satisfactory	Although none of the grants reported any involuntary restrictions on access to natural resources and none supported the resettlement of people (either voluntary or involuntary), the project followed its established processes which involved the preparation of a Process Framework on involuntary restrictions prior to contracting and to integrate appropriate measures into the design of the project.
<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>	Satisfactory	All grants that triggered the Indigenous Peoples policy prepared Social Assessments and followed a process of obtaining Free, Prior, and Informed Consent with the affected communities
<b>Physical Cultural Resources</b>	Satisfactory	Only one grant triggered the Physical Cultural Resources policy for which the grantee prepared a Physical Resources Plan that provided measures to avoid any alteration of cultural features of the resource as well as avoid any restrictions on access to the cultural resource.

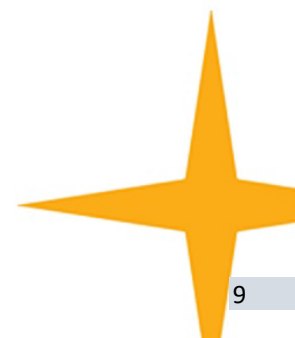
Based on the above stated findings of the TE, recommendations are provided in the table below:

Recommendations for CEPF	
<b>1.</b>	In light of the early challenges face by the project in garnering sufficient quality applications from civil society in the Cerrado, it is recommended that the CEPF <b>develop engagement strategies as part of project design</b> with time and budget allocated towards conducting outreach with key stakeholders such as civil society in any new hotspot that the CEPF enters, so that the CEPF raises its visibility and awareness in the region prior to issuing calls for proposals.
<b>2.</b>	It is recommended that the CEPF <b>adopt the Master Class model</b> , found to be highly beneficial by the grantees in improving their skills, across all current and future hotspots it engages in.
<b>3.</b>	It is recommended that the CEPF undertakes a <b>review of the graduation benchmarks</b> in each hotspot to monitor progress made towards the achievement of graduation targets for civil society,





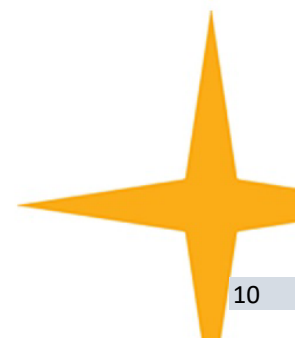
	particularly in light of the global economic downturn and changes in funding landscapes that may have impacted the initial timeframes developed in the long-term visions.
4.	It is recommended that the CEPF adopt a more flexible approach in setting targets for women's groups and consider the <b>active participation of women within project grantees' organizations</b> as an indicator as well, instead of only considering women-only organizations.
5.	It is recommended that the CEPF institute <b>annual stocktaking exercises</b> in the form of a convention or workshop within each of the hotspots that focus on broader engagement of stakeholders beyond civil society organizations, including donors, private sector, and public sector stakeholders which can be used for the purposes of <b>dissemination of best practices and lessons learned</b> , networking between different organizations, and raising the overall profile and visibility of the CEPF in any given hotspot.
6.	The TE found that <b>financial sustainability</b> of the CEPF's investment is contingent on a host of factors such as donor priorities regarding a hotspot, political environment in a national context, as well as the geographic spread and scope of a hotspot. It is therefore recommended that the CEPF pay specific attention to these crucial factors when planning for long-term investment in any hotspot to enable success of its investments.
7.	The TE found that impact of the project's portfolio has varied across the hotspots in terms of improvement in civil society capacity, provision of benefits to communities, and increases in areas under biodiversity mainstreaming, among others. This differential level of impact is coincidental with varying levels of approaches and strategies used across the three hotspots in terms of the use of small and large grants whose average amounts have varied across the type of hotspots, types of organizations and types of projects funded, and types of approaches used by RITs for supporting and engaging grantees and other stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that a <b>systematic impact assessment</b> be undertaken across the project's portfolio to examine the approaches used in developing portfolio of projects to uncover learnings on effective strategies and approaches that can be scaled up in other hotspots as well as the types of strategies and approaches that have not been effective in order to re-examine their use in future CEPF investments in other hotspots.
<b>Recommendations for CI-GEF</b>	
1.	The TE found that the reporting requirements placed significant burdens on the CEPF as well as the RITs who had to provide significant additional support to project grantees in meeting their reporting requirements. Therefore, it is recommended that future projects address this issue by <b>simplifying the reporting processes</b> .
2.	Local civil society organizations and RITs across the three hotspots highlighted the need to <b>simplify and streamline the project's safeguards</b> in the context of administering small grant amounts to smaller organizations, often lacking the necessary organizational capacity and infrastructure, for projects with shorter durations and making them fit for purpose. It is therefore recommended that the CI-GEF, in collaboration with CEPF, undertake a review of the safeguard mechanisms and requirements in the context of small grants so that they are easier to understand and implement for such projects.



# ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

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<b>AFD</b>	<b>Agence française de développement</b>
<b>AGM</b>	<b>Accountability and Grievance Mechanism</b>
<b>CBD</b>	<b>Convention on Biological Diversity</b>
<b>CEPF</b>	<b>Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund</b>
<b>CfP</b>	<b>Calls for Proposals</b>
<b>CI-GEF</b>	<b>Conservation International - Global Environment Facility</b>
<b>CSO</b>	<b>Civil Society Organization</b>
<b>CSTT</b>	<b>Civil Society Tracking Tool</b>
<b>EA</b>	<b>Executing Agency</b>
<b>EAM</b>	<b>Eastern Afromontane</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>European Union</b>
<b>FGD</b>	<b>Focus Group Discussion</b>
<b>GAP</b>	<b>Gender Action Plan</b>
<b>GTT</b>	<b>Gender Tracking Tool</b>
<b>IA</b>	<b>Implementing Agency</b>
<b>IDI</b>	<b>In-Depth Interview</b>
<b>IEB</b>	<b>Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil</b>
<b>IEO</b>	<b>Independent Evaluation Office</b>
<b>KBA</b>	<b>Key Biodiversity Area</b>
<b>KII</b>	<b>Key Informant Interview</b>
<b>M&amp;E</b>	<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
<b>METT</b>	<b>Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool</b>
<b>MTR</b>	<b>Mid-Term Review</b>

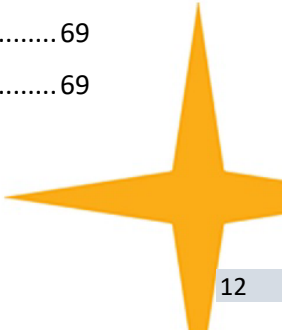


<b>NBSAP</b>	<b>National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organization</b>
<b>PCR</b>	<b>Physical Cultural Resources</b>
<b>PMU</b>	<b>Project Management Unit</b>
<b>PPG</b>	<b>Project Preparation Grant</b>
<b>PSC</b>	<b>Project Steering Committee</b>
<b>RIT</b>	<b>Regional Implementation Team</b>
<b>TE</b>	<b>Terminal Evaluation</b>
<b>TAF</b>	<b>Technical Assistance Facility</b>
<b>ToC</b>	<b>Theory of Change</b>
<b>TOR</b>	<b>Terms of Reference</b>

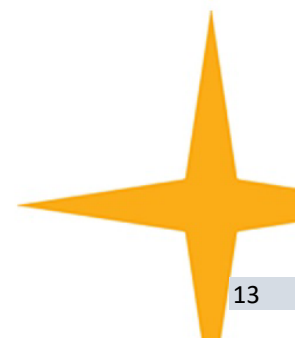


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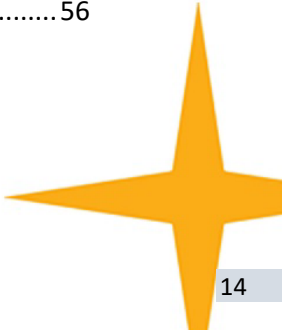
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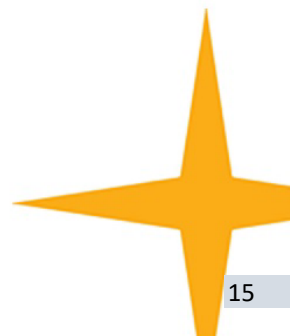
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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The crisis of biodiversity loss continues to deepen, with a rate of extinction that is as much as 1,000 times higher than it would be without anthropogenic influence; 60% of global ecosystem services have been degraded in the last 50 years alone.<sup>1</sup> There are 36 recognized biodiversity hotspots in the world which are regions richest in terms of biodiversity but most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Three of these hotspots, Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane (EAM) and Indo-Burma, have faced intense degradation due to factors such as lack of official protection, conversion of land for agriculture purposes, deforestation, exploitation of biological resources, pollution, climate change, and habitat loss among several others.

Cerrado is home to over 11,000 species, half of which are endemic, and is an important source of water and electricity generation for 90% of Brazilians. While half of its native vegetation has already been degraded, it is estimated that by 2030 it will lose an additional tens of millions hectares of vegetation. Despite the threat, only 5% of the Cerrado is under official protection. Likewise, while an estimated 95% of Indo-Burma is affected by degradation, just about 13% of the region is under official protection. The hotspot ranks in the top five for vulnerability with over 700 species endemic to the area on IUCN's Red List. As the most populated hotspot, people in the region are dependent on the hotspot for resources such as rice, fish and other fresh water products. Similarly, East Afromontane provides important natural resources such as freshwater to its population. Only 10.5% of East Afromontane's native vegetation remains, and only 15% of the region is officially protected. Degradation is exacerbated by conflict in the area which has had adverse effects on conservation efforts.

To preserve the biodiversity of the 36 global hotspots, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) was initiated in 2000 by the World Bank, the GEF and Conservation International as a crucial mechanism to enable CSOs to support conservation of critical ecosystems within biodiversity hotspots. To date, the CEPF has invested in 24 hotspots and awarded USD 271 million in grants to over 2,500 civil society organizations across the world.<sup>2</sup> Within each of its biodiversity hotspots, the CEPF operates in five-year investment periods. At the time of the GEF project design, the three hotspots that were the focus of this project were at different stages of CEPF investment, with Cerrado only in the early phase of strategy development, Eastern Afromontane in an initial investment phase (2012-2017), and Indo-Burma in a second investment phase (2013-2018) following an initial phase that commenced in 2008.<sup>3</sup> For both the EAM and Indo-Burma hotspots, the current project provided the additional funding to increase the investment period by two years, thereby the EAM investment period concluded in 2019<sup>4</sup> while the second investment phase for Indo-Burma concluded in 2020.<sup>5</sup>

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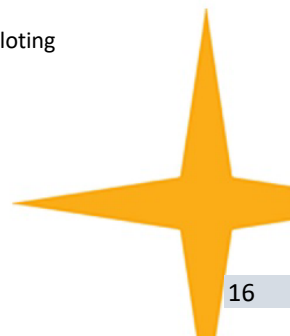
<sup>1</sup> Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis. Island Press, Washington, DC. p. 20

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cepf.net/about>

<sup>3</sup> CI-GEF. Effectively mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into government policy and private sector practice: piloting sustainability models to take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to scale Project Document

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cepf.net/our-work/biodiversity-hotspots/eastern-afromontane>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cepf.net/our-work/biodiversity-hotspots/indo-burma>





## 2. ABOUT THE PROJECT

This section provides some historical perspective to the “*Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale*” program, as well as expected outputs, outcomes, and impact along with an overview of the implementation arrangements.

### 2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Since its inception, the CEPF has undergone two distinct phases. **Phase I** of CEPF which ran from 2000 to 2007 established the CEPF as a facility for small grants for biodiversity hotspot conservation programs by CSOs, supporting 600 civil society groups in 15 hotspots across 34 countries with nearly USD 100 million to help implement region-specific investment strategies in protected areas, species conservation, and conservation capacity building.<sup>6</sup> Building upon its successes during Phase I, CEPF continued to expand in its **Phase II**, from 2008 to 2015, featuring the development of Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) as a mechanism to allow for greater presence in the field in order to improve coordination, monitoring, and capacity building of local civil society. Towards the end of the Phase II in 2014, there was a recognition at the institutional-level that CEPF should not be a permanent presence in each hotspot and should endeavor to reach an end point at which local society transitions from its support with sufficient capacity, access to resources and credibility to respond to future conservation challenges. As a result, the CEPF developed a strategic framework for its 10-year investment phase – **CEPF III** – around the achievement of key outcomes that enable conditions under which the CEPF can withdraw from a hotspot with confidence that effective biodiversity conservation programs will continue sustainably.<sup>7</sup>

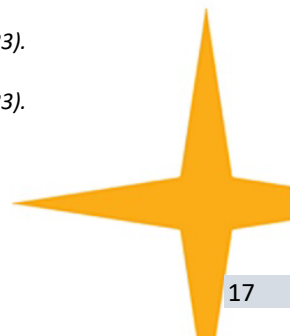
To enable the realization of this vision, the “*Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale*” program (henceforth, “the Project”) was launched as a pilot of the CEPF Phase III. The Program was full-size 60 months (later extended by 12 months) duration project with the objective to demonstrate innovative tools, methodologies and investments, and build related capacities, through which civil society in three pilot biodiversity hotspots, in partnership with public and private sector actors, can cost effectively conserve biodiversity and progress towards long-term institutional sustainability, and to replicate demonstrated approaches in nine additional hotspots.

The project was financed by a full size GEF grant of USD 9.8 million with a total of USD 84.5 million in co-financing from Conservation International (CI), the European Union (EU), the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation and the World Bank. The project aimed to demonstrate the removal of key barriers to achieving the above-mentioned goal and associated target conditions in pilot hotspots, and replicate these newly tested methodologies and approaches within other hotspots.

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<sup>6</sup> Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. *Confronting the Biodiversity Conservation Challenge: CEPF Phase III (2014 – 2023)*. Available at: [https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/cepf\\_strategicframeworkphaseiii.pdf](https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/cepf_strategicframeworkphaseiii.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. *Confronting the Biodiversity Conservation Challenge: CEPF Phase III (2014 – 2023)*. Available at: [https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/cepf\\_strategicframeworkphaseiii.pdf](https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/cepf_strategicframeworkphaseiii.pdf)



In order to achieve biodiversity conservation, the program aimed to utilize Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by making them capable partners in sustainable development and natural resource management. In turn, these CSOs, through collaboration with private sector and government partners, will be proficient in their ability to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems by addressing current threats and preventing new ones. The key barriers to address in the achievement of the goal are detailed in the table below.

TABLE 1: KEY BARRIERS ADDRESSED BY THE PROJECT

Key Barriers to Address
❖ Limited <b>knowledge</b> , awareness or application/replication of successful approaches
❖ Limited <b>track record</b> of CSOs at influencing public policy or at establishing effective partnerships with private companies in sectors driving biodiversity loss
❖ Limited institutional <b>capacity</b> and financial sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs
❖ Lack of <b>costed long-term visions</b>

Therefore, with the CEPF Secretariat as the Executing Partner, the Program was launched in April 2016, initially as a 5-year project which was expected to conclude by March 2021, the Program received two extensions for a total of 16-month period and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022. The **overall objective of the project** is to exhibit innovative tools, investments, methodologies, build related capacities in three pilot biodiversity hotspots and incorporation with public and private sectors, which leads to cost effective conservation of biodiversity and long-term institutional stability. The project objective will be achieved through **six outcomes** distributed among **four project components** as summarized in Figure 01 below and outlined in detail in Annex 01.

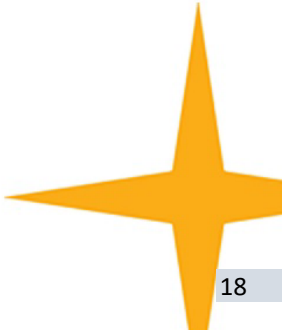
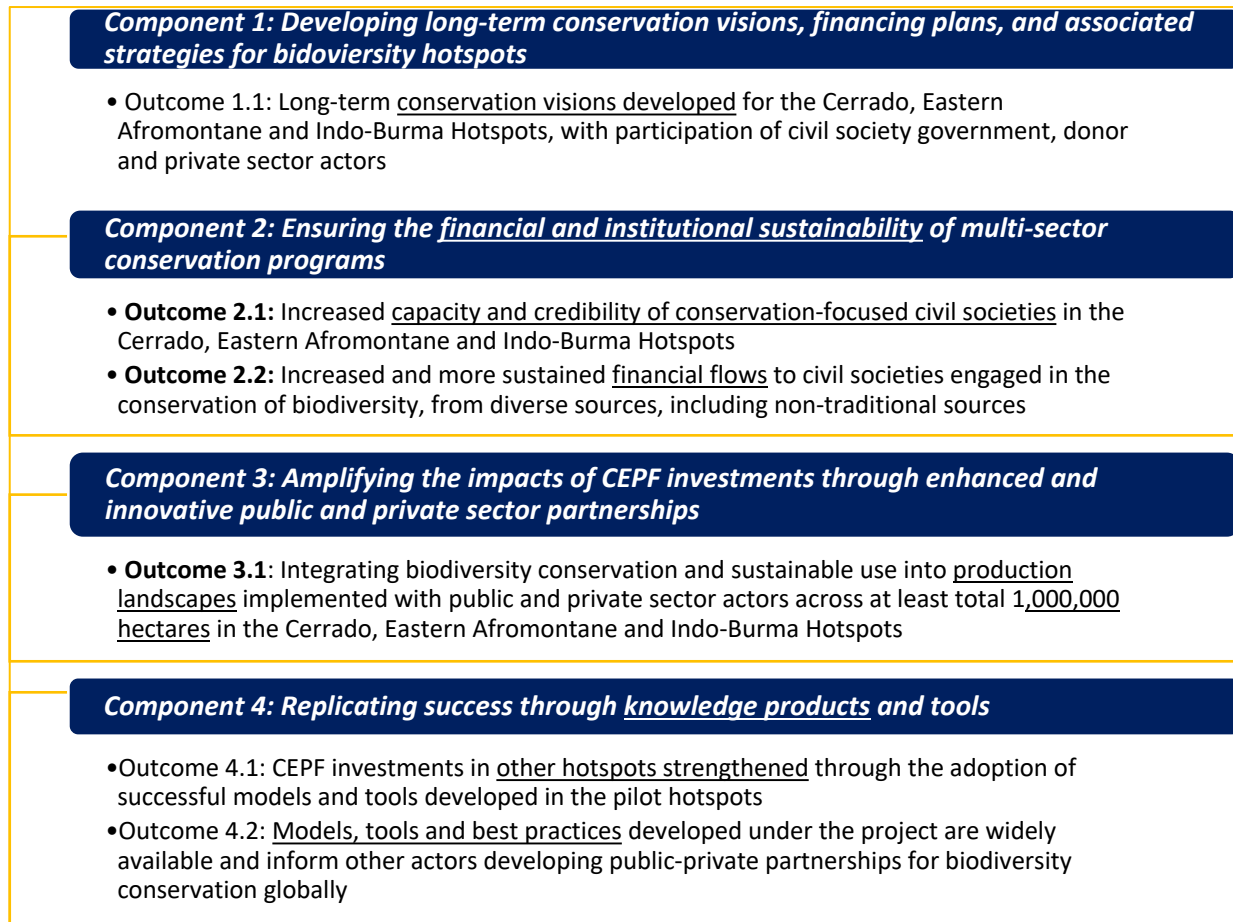


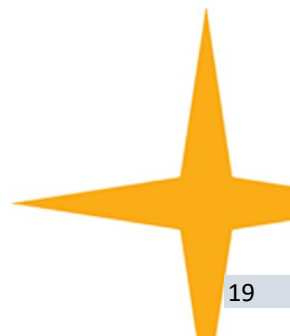
FIGURE 1: PROJECT COMPONENTS AND OUTCOMES



## 2.2 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

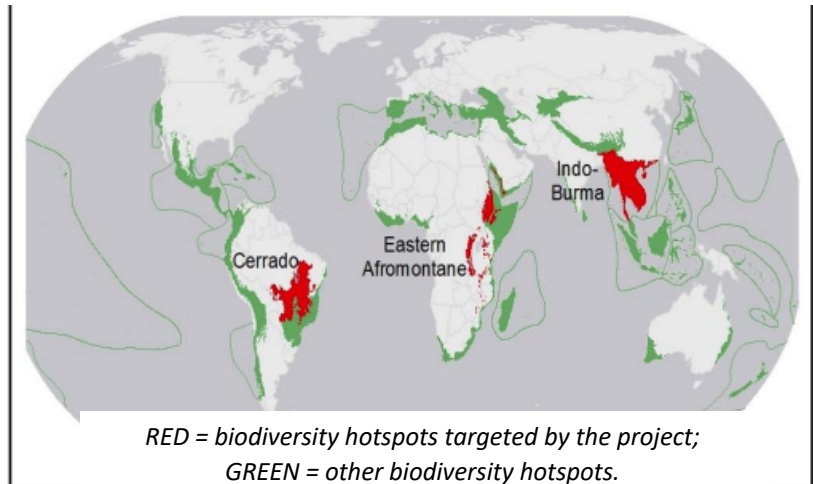
The project focuses on the following pilot biodiversity hotspots, as shown in Figure 2:

- i. **The Cerrado biodiversity hotspot** is the most extensive woodland-savanna in South America. Of the more than 10,000 plant species found in the Cerrado, 4,400 are endemic to it, as are 16 globally threatened species of birds, mammals and amphibians. The Cerrado is under threat from large-scale agriculture, particularly soybean and livestock production, resulting in deforestation rate twice that of the Amazon.
- ii. **The Eastern Afromontane biodiversity hotspot** comprises a discontinuous chain of roughly four ranges of mountains extending from Saudi Arabia down to Zimbabwe. Of the 10,856



species identified in the Eastern Afromontane, almost one third are endemic to it, including more than 2,350 endemic plants. Biodiversity in the Eastern Afromontane is threatened by habitat destruction and fragmentation due to agricultural development, along with overexploitation of biological resources, invasive species and the effects of climate change.

**FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF THE PILOT BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS TARGETED BY THE PROJECT**



- iii. **The Indo-Burma hotspot** encompasses numerous mountain ranges and several of Asia’s largest rivers. The hotspot has extraordinarily high plant species richness with an estimated 15,000 to 25,000 species of vascular plant. It hosts more than 400 mammal species, 1,200 bird species and extraordinary numbers of freshwater fish. Indo-Burma is the world’s most threatened hotspot, with only 5% of its natural habitat remaining and more people than any other hotspot. Key threats include conversion of natural habitats to agro-industrial plantations of rubber, oil palm, tea and other commodities, and proliferation of hydropower dams.

Due to its focus on the three target biodiversity hotspots, the project covered a total of 23 countries across 3 continents at the time of design. During implementation, this approach was modified and the total number of countries were reduced from 23 to 18, primarily due to a more focused approach in the most widespread of the hotspots – Eastern Afromontane – as elaborated further in the Project Strategy section below. The following table shows the list of countries covered by the project during its implementation.

**TABLE 2: LIST OF COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE PROJECT ACROSS THREE HOTSPOTS**

#	Biodiversity Hotspots		
	Cerrado	Eastern Afromontane	Indo-Burma
1	Brazil	Burundi	Cambodia
2		Democratic Republic of Congo	China
3		Eritrea	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
4		Ethiopia	Myanmar
5		Kenya	Thailand
6		Malawi	Vietnam
7		Mozambique	
8		Rwanda	
9		South Sudan	
10		Tanzania	
11		Uganda	
12		Yemen	



13	Zambia	
14	Zimbabwe	

### 3. ABOUT THE TERMINAL EVALUATION (TE)

The GEF-funded *“Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale”* project began in April 2016 and was initially scheduled to terminate in March 2021 (now July 2022 after a 16-month extension). This section provides details on the purpose of the terminal evaluation as well as its programmatic and geographic scope in line with the terms of reference.

#### 3.1 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE TE

The project is a full-sized GEF-funded project. In accordance with GEF policies and procedures, all full-sized GEF-funded projects are required to undergo an independent terminal review.

##### 3.1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE TE

The purpose of this terminal review is to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project by assessing its design, implementation, and achievement of objectives. The evaluation is expected to (a) promote accountability and transparency; and (b) facilitate synthesis of lessons. Also, the TE seeks to provide feedback to allow the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to identify recurring issues across the GEF portfolio and contribute to GEF IEO databases for aggregation and analysis.

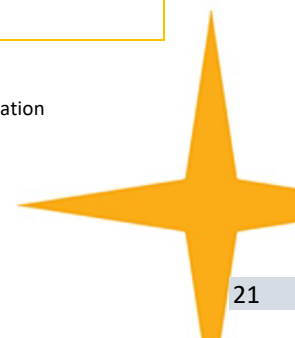
#### 3.2 SCOPE OF THE TE

The programmatic scope of the terminal evaluation primarily encompasses the objectives, outcomes, and outputs as detailed in the project documents and logical frameworks. In particular, the project implementation activities from its start in **April 2016 till March 2022** were reviewed. Furthermore, as outlined in the TORs, the scope of work for the current assignment covered aspects sketched in the table below:

TABLE 3: PROGRAMMATIC SCOPE OF THE TE

SCOPE OF WORK
<p><b>Assess the project based on the standardized terminal review GEF Criteria, Questions, and Rating System:</b> In order to establish objectively comparable performance, the review team will assess and rate the project under review on the following eight categories and rate them on a six-point scale from highly satisfactory (6) to highly unsatisfactory (1)<sup>8</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project Design Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Project design</li> <li>○ Project results framework/logframe</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> The rating system is established by GEF and based on the “Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations – Evaluation Document No. 3”, 2008, GEF.



- **Project performance and progress towards results:**
  - Relevance
  - Effectiveness and progress towards results
  - Efficiency
- **Project Implementation Management:**
  - Project management
  - Results-based work planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting
  - Financial management and co-finance
  - Stakeholder engagement and communication
- **Sustainability**
- **Gender mainstreaming**
- **Environmental and Social Safeguards**
- **Performance of Partners**

### 3.3 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

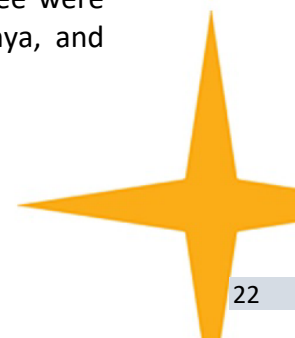
The TE was undertaken from April 2022 to June 2022. The TE Team adopted a consultative and participatory approach and employed mixed methodologies, combining qualitative and quantitative data from both primary and secondary data sources. The TE was undertaken by Cynosure International, Inc.<sup>9</sup> and the team included Ms. Umm e Zia as the International Team Leader, Mr. Tiago Cisalpino, Mr. Francis Ngari, and Ms. Chansereivisa Duong as the National Consultants for Brazil, Kenya, and Cambodia respectively, Mr. Faaiz Irfan as the Evaluation Assistant, and Ms. Hamda Arif as the Project Coordinator.

The TE was designed to be undertaken based on a literature review, collection of primary data from a sample of stakeholders through key informant and in-depth interviews. In addition, the TE also involved the selection of sites for field visits in a total of three selected countries. One country from each target biodiversity hotspot was selected for undertaking field visits with Brazil representing Cerrado, Kenya representing Eastern Afromontane, and Cambodia representing Indo-Burma hotspots. The list of documents reviewed is provided in Annex 02.

Based on the **desk review**, the programmatic and geographic scope of the evaluation activities as well as samples for interviews was determined. In addition, Key Informant Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide sheets were developed by the TE Team and utilized during the course of interviews with various stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries, etc. The data collection tools pertaining to the various project participants are attached in Annex 04.

**Key informant interviews** were conducted with the implementing agency (CI-GEF), executing partners (CEPF), the Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) in each of the three target hotspots, and representatives from government agencies and donor institutions. These interviews were conducted remotely using online communication software, including Zoom and MS Teams. In addition, **In-Depth Interviews** with a select sample of large and small project grantees were also conducted in each of the biodiversity hotspots. Lastly, **field visits** to one large grantee were undertaken by the National Consultants in the three selected countries (Brazil, Kenya, and

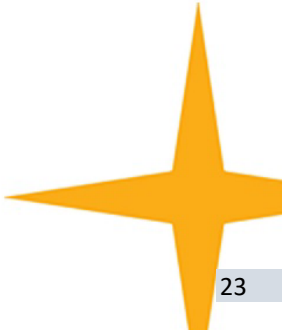
<sup>9</sup> [www.cynosure-intl.com](http://www.cynosure-intl.com)



Cambodia) which entailed interviews with project management staff and focus group discussions with the project’s beneficiaries. In total, the TE Team conducted 09 KIIs, 09 IDIs, and 03 FGDs with the various stakeholders. The details of the interviewees are provided in Annex 03.

**TABLE 4: NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED**

No.	Data Collection Method	No. of Interviews
1.	Key Informant Interviews	09
2.	In-Depth Interviews	09
3.	Focus Group Discussions	03
<b>Total Interviews</b>		<b>21</b>



## 4. TE FINDINGS

### 4.1 PROJECT JUSTIFICATION (DESIGN OF THE GEF PROJECT)

This section provides an assessment of the project’s justification through an analysis of its underlying explicit and implicit assumptions and theory of change, along with its relevance to the national priorities, GEF strategies, and CI institutional priorities.

#### 4.1.1 RELEVANCE

The TE team found that the Project is relevant at the local, national, global, and institutional levels.

At the **institutional level**, the project is consistent with the *GEF-5 Focal Area Objectives 1 and 2* of the Biodiversity focal area. Objective 1 of the GEF-5 Biodiversity Focal Area pertains to the improved sustainability of Protected Area Systems.<sup>10</sup> The Project sought to support the improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas (Outcome 1.1) through the development of new management models based on direct involvement of CSOs and local communities in protected area management. Additionally, the Project also supported Outcome 1.2 (Increased revenue for protected area systems to meet total expenditures required for management) by strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to better position them to secure funding for protected areas.

Furthermore, the Project also strongly links with Objective 2 of the GEF-5 strategy aimed at mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and sectors through its focus on supporting civil society to work in partnership with the public and private sectors to produce policy measures that better support management and conservation of biodiversity (Outcome 2.2) and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into business practices of major industries such as agriculture, mining, and energy, and other sectors (Outcome 2.1).

At the **global level**, the project is fully aligned with the goals of the *Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)* and particularly with the *CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020*. The project is aligned with Strategic Goal A of the CBD Strategic Plan through its focus on addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society. In addition, the project also aligns with Strategic Goal E that pertains to enhancing implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building due to its targeted support of local civil society organizations operating in the biodiversity hotspots through grants and technical assistance.

At the **national level**, the project aligns with a range of national and regional strategies including the *National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)*. An overview of the project’s alignment with a sample of the target countries in each biodiversity hotspot is described below.

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<sup>10</sup> Global Environment Facility. *GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies*. Available at: [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF-5\\_FOCAL\\_AREA\\_STRATEGIES.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF-5_FOCAL_AREA_STRATEGIES.pdf)





**Brazil:** The project is highly aligned with the 2017 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan<sup>11</sup> in particular with:

- Target 2: Integration of biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies;
- Target 5: Reduction in the rate of loss of native habitats by at least 50%;
- Target 7: Incorporation of and promotion of sustainable management practices in agriculture, livestock production, extractive activities, among others; and
- Target 11: Conservation of importance biodiversity and ecosystem areas through protected areas

**Cambodia:** The project is also aligned with the 2016 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan<sup>12</sup>, in particular with:

- Target 3: Integration of biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies;
- Target 5: Sustainable management of majority of areas under agriculture, animal production, aquaculture, and forestry;
- Target 6: Restoration of 10% of the most under-pressure protected areas, conservation areas, agro and forest ecosystems;
- Target 7: Reduction of negative impacts on ecosystems caused by unsustainable production and consumption activities by government, private sector, and other stakeholders; and
- Target 8: Development and implementation of management for existing protected areas and conservation areas

**Kenya:** The current project aligns with the 2000 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan<sup>13</sup>, particularly with the following:

- Action Item 1: Strengthen institutional and community capacities and linkages;
- Action Item 6: Strengthen and maintain high standards of management and conservation in the protected area system;
- Action Item 9: Promote the conservation and sustainable utilization of forests; and
- Action Item 14: Promote the sustainable utilization of the components of biodiversity, including by recognizing the role of the private sector and effectively involving them in biodiversity conservation.

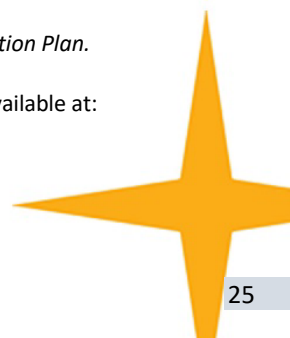
At the **local level**, the project is particularly relevant and highly aligned with the *needs and interests of local civil society as well as indigenous and women groups*. With regards to CSOs, the CEPF fulfills a crucial function as a mechanism through which local CSOs can access grant funding to implement local and regional biodiversity conservation and protected area management projects. Through this partnership, the local CSOs working in their respective biodiversity

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Environment – Secretariat of Biodiversity. 2017. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/br/br-nbsap-v3-en.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Kingdom of Cambodia – National Council for Sustainable Development. 2016. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/kh/kh-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. 2000. *The Kenya National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. Available at: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ke/ke-nbsap-01-en.pdf>



hotspots also benefit from increased capacity building as they obtain technical assistance from the CEPF and its associated RITs which enables them to be in a better position to access funds from larger regional and international donors. At the community level, the project also supports indigenous groups and women to be stalwarts of sustainable management of critical ecosystems by increasing their capacity for sustainably using ecosystem goods and services and improving gender-equitable access to ecosystem services.

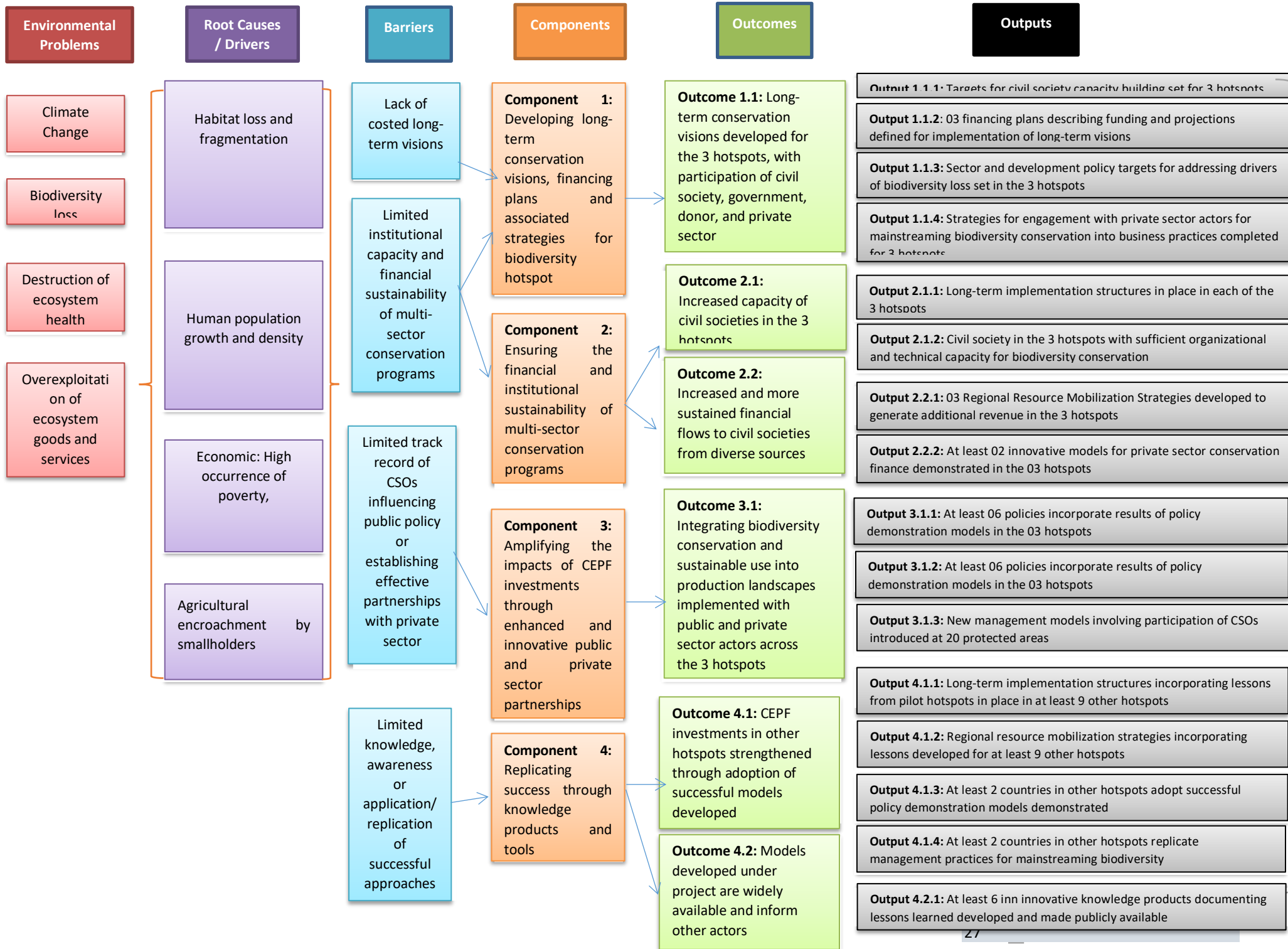
In summary, the project was found to be **highly relevant** to the various goals and needs of key stakeholders at the institutional, local, national, and global level through its alignment with key global and national priorities and action plans, as well as directly benefitting local civil society organizations and communities through access to grants and increased capacity building.

#### 4.1.2 PROJECT THEORY OF CHANGE

The project document did not provide an explicitly laid out Theory of Change (ToC). Hence the TE Team constructed a ToC based on the descriptions of the project objectives, outcomes, outputs, underlying risks and assumptions, and pathways for long-term impact based on the project documents and through consultations with stakeholders, as elaborated in the Figure below.

FIGURE 3: PROJECT THEORY OF CHANGE





Supporting the CEPF Phase III Strategic Framework, the current project is based on *biodiversity mainstreaming as a crucial conservation paradigm* that can minimize pressures on protected areas and promote conservation of biodiversity beyond their boundaries by integrating conservation goals into the plans, policies, and practices of public and private sector actors. In addition to the greater need for engaging the public and private sector to mainstream biodiversity, the project also recognizes the crucial role of civil society organizations in bringing global experience and good practice to local contexts, transferring skills and knowledge to government conservation agencies and private sector, and brokering partnerships among traditional and non-traditional conservation actors.

The project seeks to capacitate civil society through the provision of small and large grants and technical assistance to enable CSOs to reach a point where they no longer have to rely on CEPF funding, but are able to seek varied and diverse sources of funding. Components of this project that are integral to the project's Theory of Change, include: the establishment of long-term implementing structures, successful demonstration of civil society's ability to form partnerships with the public and private sector actors to introduce biodiversity mainstreaming practices and policies, and the creation of long-term visions accompanied by financing plans and resource mobilization strategies.

In doing so, the project aims to build on the CEPF's previous two phases and pilot Phase III in select biodiversity hotspots (Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane, and Indo-Burma). A critical aspect of the CEPF's Phase III is that the CEPF aims to define and work towards an endpoint where the CEPF can withdraw from a hotspot once certain "graduation" conditions and targets are met which will enable local civil society to transition from its support with sufficient capacity to operate independently and sustainably.<sup>14</sup> Despite its critical role, the civil society has remained under-utilized and under-funded and faces a number of barriers to its efficacy and sustainability in the realm of biodiversity conservation which the project seeks to address through its four components as described below.

On the basis of these, the objective of the current project is to demonstrate innovative tools, methodologies and investments, and build related capacities through which civil society in three pilot biodiversity hotspots, in partnership with public and private sector actors, can cost effectively conserve biodiversity and progress towards long-term institutional sustainability. In addition, the project also aims to replicate these demonstrated approaches in nine additional hotspots.

**Component 1** involves developing long-term conservation visions, financing plans and associated strategies for the three target biodiversity hotspots (Outcome 1.1). These long-term visions are products of multi-sectoral participatory processes developed with the involvement of civil society, indigenous peoples, women's groups, government, donor, and private sector actors in each hotspot. These long-term visions encompass setting hotspot-specific targets for civil society capacity building that need to be met in order for a 'hotspot' to graduate from CEPF support (Output 1.1.1), accompanying financing plans for each hotspot to establish the overall cost estimate for meeting graduation targets (Output 1.1.2), sector and/or development policy

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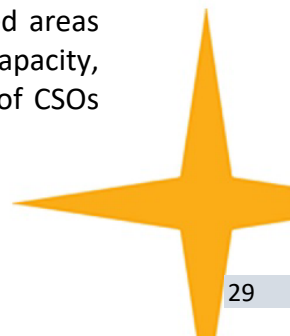
<sup>14</sup> Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. *Confronting the Biodiversity Conservation Challenge: CEPF Phase III (2014 – 2023)*. Available at: [https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/cepf\\_strategicframeworkphaseiii.pdf](https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/cepf_strategicframeworkphaseiii.pdf)



targets for addressing key drivers of biodiversity loss for each pilot hotspot (Output 1.1.3), and strategies for private sector engagement for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into business practices of industries driving biodiversity loss in each hotspot (Output 1.1.4). Through this component, the project seeks to address the barrier created by lack of costed long-term visions that lay out a clear set of criteria tailored to the specificities of each hotspot which enable to measure progress towards and achievement of long-term goals of CSOs graduating from CEPF support. Moreover, the financing plans accompanying the long-term visions also facilitate in presenting a clearer picture of the scale of overall financing needs, as well as the current availability of resources and opportunities for revenue generation.

**Component 2** aims to ensure the financial and institutional sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs through increased capacity of civil societies in the three hotspot (Outcome 2.1) and increased and sustained financial flows to civil societies engaged in biodiversity conservation from diverse sources (Outcome 2.2). A key step towards increased capacity of civil societies in three hotspots is the institution of long-term implementation structures in each hotspot in the form of the RITs which are envisioned to serve as the steward of their hotspot's long-term vision by managing a small grants program and monitoring and evaluating the impact of CEPF's large and small grants (Output 2.1.1). The RITs would also build civil society capacity in each hotspot by providing technical assistance as well as capacity building grants to grantees to ensure that civil societies in each hotspot have improved organizational and technical capacity to undertake biodiversity conservation (Output 2.1.2). To achieve increased and more sustained financial flows to civil society, the project also seeks to develop three regional resource mobilization strategies to generate additional revenue for conservation programs in the three hotspots (Output 2.2.1), along with demonstrating at least two innovative models for private sector conservation finance (Output 2.2.2). Therefore, this component will seek to address the barriers of limited institutional capacity and financial sustainability of conservation programs by instituting long-term implementation structures in the form of RITs which will support local CSOs through grants and technical assistance as well as by developing regional resource mobilization strategies to generate additional revenue.

**Component 3** of the project aims to amplify the impacts of CEPF investments through enhanced and innovative public and private partnerships by developing and implementing models to more effectively mainstream biodiversity conservation into public policy and private sector practices in the target biodiversity hotspots (Outcome 3.1). The overall project target for this component is to integrate biodiversity conservation into production landscapes implemented by public and private sector actors across at least 1 million hectares in the three hotspots. To achieve this, the project provides grants and technical assistance to CSOs for the development and implementation of at least 6 policies, programs or plans that address drivers of biodiversity loss in the pilot hotspots (Output 3.1.1). Similarly, through the grants to CSOs, the project also aims to have at least 12 biodiversity-friendly management practices incorporated into business practices of key change agents in select sectors such as agriculture, energy, and mining (Output 3.1.2). Lastly, the project also envisions the introduction of new management models involving direct participation of CSOs, indigenous groups, and local communities at 20 protected areas across the three hotspots (Output 3.1.3). In addition to addressing limited institutional capacity, the project through its granting mechanism, will seek to demonstrate a track record of CSOs



influencing public policy and establishing effective partnerships with private companies regarding biodiversity conservation.

Lastly, **Component 4** of the project involves replicating success through knowledge products and tools by documenting successful models and tools demonstrated in the pilot hotspots under the first three components and facilitating their wider replication. In particular, the project will seek the adoption of successful models and tools to strengthen CEPF investments in other hotspots (Outcome 4.1), including the experiences of long-term implementation structures in the pilot hotspots (Output 4.1.1), lessons learned from the use of regional resource mobilization strategies (Output 4.1.2), successful adoption of public policy demonstration models (Output 4.1.3) and replication of management practices for biodiversity mainstreaming within the private sector (Output 4.1.4). To achieve this component, the project also aims for the wide-spread availability of models, tools and best practices developed under this project to inform other actors developing public-private partnerships for biodiversity conservation (Outcome 4.2/Output 4.2.1). Through this component, the project seeks to directly address barriers to achieving long-term sustainability and CEPF goals resulting from limited knowledge, awareness and application/replication of successful approaches.

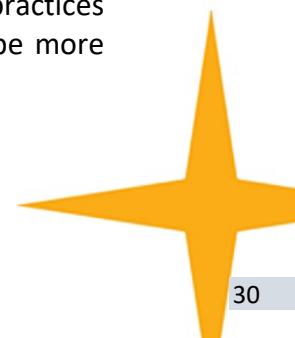
## 4.2 PROJECT STRATEGY

This section presents a review and analysis of the project's strategy, particularly the project design and its results framework.

### 4.2.1 PROJECT DESIGN ASSESSMENT

The current project builds on significant previous experience of the CEPF, working in partnership with Conservation International and the GEF, in implementing Phases I and II of its Strategic Framework. The aim of the current project is to pilot certain elements of the CEPF's current Phase III strategy which was developed based on lessons learned from the implementation of the earlier two phases. In particular, the TE revealed that the CEPF Phase III strategy is based on the findings that the CEPF would be more effective if it engaged a subset of the hotspots it operates in for longer than just the five-year investment periods in order to build the capacities of the local civil society organizations and better position them to more sustainably work towards biodiversity conservation. To facilitate that, the current project sought to develop long-term vision documents (20-25 years) for the target hotspots which serve as strategic documents that set out a pathway for transitioning civil society from CEPF-support in each hotspot that it works in.

The TE Team found that the long-term vision documents were products of an extensive consultative process, involving a broad range of stakeholders, including local and international civil society organizations, donor partners, local indigenous communities, and public and private sector stakeholders. Furthermore, these long-term visions were designed to be accompanied by the associated financing plans, resource mobilization strategies, as well as targets and conditions for civil society in a hotspot to meet for a hotspot to be considered as having graduated from CEPF support, and targets for biodiversity mainstreaming in the private sector business practices and public sector policies and frameworks, which enable these long-term visions to be more actionable and clear in terms of how and what they set out to achieve.



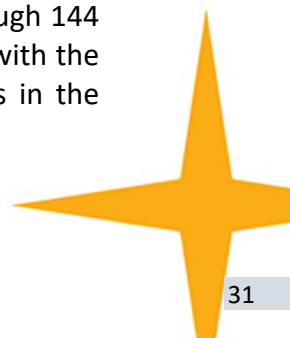
Another key element of the CEPF Phase III Strategy piloted by the current project pertains to the introduction of long-term implementation structures within each target biodiversity hotspot, as an evolution from the previous RIT model utilized in CEPF Phase II. In prior phases of the CEPF, the RITs had a more limited role of being engaged in the much shorter 5-year investment cycles of the CEPF and being custodians of the shorter-term ecosystem profiles. However, the current project sought to pilot a shift towards evolving the RITs to become long-term implementation structures that are tasked with not just supporting the long-term visions of the CEPF but actively driving the process by helping build a resilient civil society capable of understanding global contexts and trends and sustainably working on biodiversity conservation. The evolved role of the RITs accorded greater benefits to civil society in terms of strengthening their capacities through trainings in order to enable them to gain the necessary knowledge and skills that would help them in future fundraising efforts.

Many of the project's outcomes and outputs were designed to be achieved through the provision of the grants to local and international civil society organizations. These grants were to be accessed by a range of civil society organizations which included local and international Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and community-based organizations such as indigenous groups and women groups.

A review of the project documents further revealed that the project design included generic assessment criteria and frameworks on various components of the project, such as determining targets for biodiversity mainstreaming in the public and private sector as well as targets for civil society and other biodiversity hotspots as part of its long-term vision documents. Similarly, the project design also charted out preliminary functions of the RITs as long-term implementation structures. Such an approach allowed the project to work towards shared goals and outcomes without being over-prescriptive in following certain processes.

In fact, the TE revealed that the project design had sufficient flexibility and adaptability built into its design to allow the project room to maneuver through an expansive geographic scope and varying socio-political conditions across the 18 countries under the three biodiversity hotspots. For instance, amongst the target biodiversity hotspots, the EAM was found to be the most geographically expansive covering a total of 14 countries across two continents. To be more effective as well as due to the prevailing socio-political instability and conflict in some of the countries in the hotspot, the project instead chose to focus on a subset of the EAM hotspot, namely the Albertine Rift and the Eastern Arc Mountains areas which fell in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda. Similarly, the design also enabled the project to be adaptable to different working modalities with the three different RITs.

The current project represented the CEPF's first foray into the Cerrado hotspot, whereas the Indo-Burma and EAM hotspots had concurrent CEPF projects ongoing at the time of project design. The TE revealed some early challenges in the CEPF's entry into the Cerrado which arose from the lack of an explicit entry and communications strategy to socialize the CEPF's aims and objectives in the hotspot and raise sufficient awareness and visibility amongst the local civil society. This was evident from the outcome of the first calls for proposals where although 144 applications were received, the submitted proposals were found to align insufficiently with the aims and objectives of the CEPF. Therefore, it was found that the project's activities in the



Cerrado hotspot could have benefitted from using the inception period to develop and implement an effective entry strategy aimed at greater outreach to the civil society organizations and the private sector regarding the CEPF's aims and objectives, as well as to improve its visibility in a region where it had no prior presence or engagement. Another key challenge faced in the Cerrado stemming from the project design was that the value accorded to small grants set at under USD 20,000 was deemed as insufficient to garner the interests of civil society organizations. Therefore, in September 2017 (FY18), the project modified its approach in Cerrado to raise the maximum grant value for small grants from USD 20,000 to USD 50,000 based on stakeholder feedback and consultations.

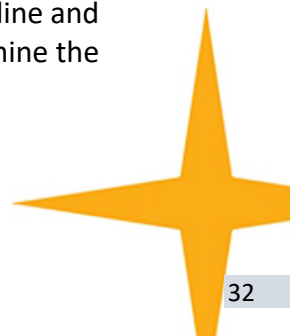
In summary, the TE Team found that the project design was sound and based on an extensive prior history of work that the CEPF had done in partnership with Conservation International and the GEF. The project was seen to be a product of the CEPF's new phase and strategic approach which in itself was based on incorporating lessons learned from prior iterations of the CEPF, and that these lessons learned had been translated well into the piloting of the new strategic phase. The project was also found to have sufficient flexibility built into its design to allow space and room to adapt to different contexts across the three target biodiversity hotspots during implementation. However, some challenges were noted in the form of lack of an effective entry strategy into the Cerrado which were nevertheless resolved due to a proactive and timely adaptive management by the CEPF and the RIT in Cerrado.

#### **4.2.2 PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

An in-depth review and analysis of the project's results framework indicated that the framework provided in the project document lists specific indicators, baseline, and targets for each project outcome. Further supporting each outcome are lists of project outputs, their indicators and associated targets to gauge progress towards achieving the outcomes and in turn the project components as well.

In addition, the project document provides a comprehensive Project Results Monitoring Plan covering all outcome and output indicators included in the Results Framework, and listing specific metrics, the methodology to be undertaken to achieve indicator metrics, baseline data, location of activity, frequency of monitoring, and the responsible parties to ensure the implementation of the activity. Moreover, the Plan provides types of M&E components and activities to be undertaken at various points of the project duration and specifies the frequency of each activity as well as the associated stakeholder responsibility and indicative resources.

The Project was found to have a sequential design, with outputs building off the work done upon one another. Furthermore, the Project Results Framework was well designed as each of the Outcomes were interlinked, providing a clear picture of Project baseline, end of project targets and expected outputs and indicators. Overall, the Project Results Framework presents a specific and measurable approach by having quantifiable indicators and targets, associated with each of the Outputs and Outcomes. Moreover, since most of the project activities were to be conducted via grants to civil society organizations during implementation, quantitative Project Baseline and End of Project Targets were provided wherever possible, as it was not possible to determine the specific types of projects that would be granted under the project.



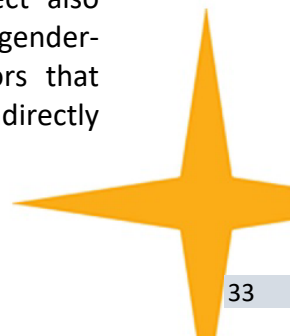


Nevertheless, the project updated its baseline figures for its outcome indicators as part of the updated project's results monitoring framework in June 2016, two months after the start of the project in April 2016. Notably, in the case of Outcome Indicator 3.1.1, the baseline figure for the number of hectares of production landscapes under effective biodiversity mainstreaming was updated to 1.8 million hectares, with the end of project target set for bringing in an additional 1 million hectares of production landscapes under effective biodiversity mainstreaming.

Various indicators pertaining to Outcome 2.1 revolve around the increased capacity of civil society organizations. To enable the project to quantifiably measure such improvements, targets were set to show incremental percent change in scores on civil society and gender mainstreaming tracking tools. For example, Outcome indicator 2.1.1 pertained to having a collective improvement in civil society tracking tool scores by 20% compared to scores at baseline. In addition to having collective hotspot-level improvements, indicators were also developed that specifically targeted number of civil society organizations that the project aimed to improve. For example, Outcome Indicator 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 sought 60 grantees and 30 grantees to show incremental improvements in civil society tracking tool and gender mainstreaming tracking tool scores. Nevertheless, it was observed that the targets for civil society improvements as well as other indicators such as hectares under effective biodiversity mainstreaming (Outcome Indicator 3.1.1), protected areas under new management models (3.1.2) and globally threatened species with reduced threats to their population (3.1.3) were not disaggregated by hotspots in the results framework; however, the project has reported on these indicators with data disaggregated by the three hotspots. Furthermore, to measure improvement in civil society capacities, the TE Team found that the project over-relied on the use of self-administered CSO Tracking Tool, without making available other forms of independent verification. As elaborated in the Project – level Monitoring Systems section below, these self-assessment measures were found to be susceptible to various biases and errors such as responder bias and reliability errors, etc.

Some gaps in setting and reporting on indicators were also observed. The TE found that the project's objective level indicators were identical to its outcome level indicators spread across the four project components. In addition, targets were not established against these objective indicators but could be discerned from the targets established in the outcome-level indicators on which they are based. Lastly, although the project's results framework at the time of design stipulated one outcome indicator measuring the adoption of best practices, models and tools in areas outside CEPF investments (**Outcome** Indicator 4.2.1), the project has not reported against this indicator in any of its reporting. Instead, the project has reported on the associated output indicator which set out to measure the number of knowledge products developed under the project and made publicly available (**Output** Indicator 4.2.1).

Gender was found to be well-integrated into the indicators across different Outcomes. For instance, the outcome on increased civil society capacities (Outcome 2.1) included indicators for number of women's groups that the project would seek to improve capacity for. Moreover, as mentioned above, the gender mainstreaming capacities of civil society organizations were tracked and measured as an additional separate indicator. In addition, the project also established an indicator for the number of communities benefitting from increased gender-equitable access to ecosystem services (Outcome Indicator 3.1.5). Lastly, indicators that measured the number of individuals who directly (Outcome Indicator 3.1.6) and indirectly



(Outcome Indicator 3.1.7) received socio-economic benefits as a result of the grantees' projects were disaggregated by gender with women comprising 50% of the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, it was noted that neither the project's results framework nor the Project Document laid out a criteria for determining what constitutes a benefit as direct or indirect.

A Safeguards Screening process was undertaken at the time of project design. The results indicated that since the CEPF did not have a Gender Mainstreaming Policy at the time of project design, a Gender Mainstreaming Plan for the project be developed and implemented. This was found to be reflected in the project's Results Monitoring Plan which includes an overall Gender mainstreaming indicator which measures the number of hotspots in which the Gender Mainstreaming Plan was implemented. Similarly, the CEPF also did not have an explicit best practice document on stakeholder engagement at the beginning of the Project Preparation Grant (PPG), as a result of which a comprehensive stakeholder mapping for each of the pilot hotspots was undertaken at the state of the PPG phase by the CEPF Secretariat. Overall, the Safeguards Screening Process identified a total of 06 E&S Safeguards that might be triggered by the project, which included: a) Involuntary Resettlement Policy; b) Indigenous People's Policy; c) Pest Management Policy; d) Physical Cultural Resources Policy; e) Gender Mainstreaming Policy; and f) Stakeholder Engagement Best Practice. As a result, the project developed specific indicators for the measurement of the implementation of the Safeguards which is further elaborated in the Safeguards section.

In summary, the project results framework was found to provide sufficient monitoring guidance and planning with well-integration of gender mainstreaming and safeguards. However, some limitations in the form of over-reliance on self-report measures and limited mechanisms of independent verification of outcomes and results limited the effectiveness of crucial project objectives. Hence, the overall design was found to be **Satisfactory** as the project bases itself on lessons learned from previous CEPF phases, maintains a flexible approach, and enables the CEPF and its partners to pivot towards long-term strategic thinking.

### 4.3 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

This section provides a detailed assessment of the processes and structures involved in project implementation and adaptive management. Specific aspects analyzed include: Quality of supervision by CI-GEF Agency, Execution Arrangements, Financial Management and Co-Financing, Work Planning, Project-level Monitoring Systems, and Reporting.

#### 4.3.1 QUALITY OF SUPERVISION BY CI-GEF

As the Implementing Agency of the project, the CI-GEF Agency was responsible for providing overall project assurance, including supporting project implementation by maintaining oversight of all technical and financial management aspects to CEPF (Executing Agency). As part of its oversight functions, the CI-GEF Agency was also responsible for monitoring the project's implementation and achievement of outcomes and outputs, ensuring proper use of GEF funds, and reviewing and approving any changes in budgets or work plans.

The TE Team ascertained that CI-GEF has been delivering on its mandate by reviewing and approving the annual procurement plans as well as the associated budgets to ensure their alignment with given project budget and timeframe. Moreover, the CI-GEF Agency also reviewed



and approved the quarterly technical and financial reports and the annual project implementation reports submitted by the CEPF to verify the progress made towards achieving the project's results and objectives. Due to its close and cordial working relationship with the CEPF, facilitated by their close proximity, the CI-GEF Agency has engaged the Project Management Team at the CEPF in the form of both regular check-ins and ad-hoc meetings to discuss emergent issues, seek clarifications and further elaborations on reporting. Within the CI-GEF Agency, the Safeguards Specialist has also closely reviewed the quarterly and annual progress reports submitted by the CEPF to ensure that sufficient attention has been paid to the safeguards implementation.

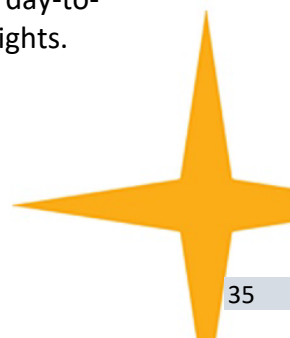
The CI-GEF Agency has also participated in monitoring activities at various stages of the project's implementation, such as at the inception stage where it coordinated the project's inception workshop with the CEPF. In addition, the CI-GEF Agency also successfully completed three monitoring field missions, one in each of its target biodiversity hotspots. As part of these field missions, the Project Manager at the CI-GEF Agency engaged with a broad range of stakeholders, including the Regional Implementation Teams (RITs), local civil society organizations, and community members in order to obtain and triangulate information regarding the project's implementation from various sources. For instance, the field missions allowed CI-GEF to gauge the extent to which communities were aware and knowledgeable about the project as well as its grievance redressal mechanisms, and to understand the extent and type of support the local civil society organizations obtained from CEPF.

These three field missions were undertaken prior to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, since the pandemic, the CI-GEF Agency has been unable to undertake further field missions due to various travel restrictions and lockdowns. The COVID-19 pandemic also slowed down progress, especially on Component 4 of the project and on many of the grantees' projects, which necessitated the CI-GEF in granting a one-year no-cost extension to the project in May 2020.

In brief, the CI-GEF Agency has been delivering on its responsibilities in a diligent and timely manner and according to the tasks assigned to it in the project design document. In conclusion, the quality of supervision and implementation by CI-GEF as the Implementation Agency was deemed **Satisfactory** by the TE.

#### 4.3.2 EXECUTION ARRANGEMENTS & QUALITY OF EXECUTION

With CI-GEF Agency as the Implementing Agency (IA), the CEPF Secretariat acted as the Executing Agency (EA) of the project. With overall leadership provided by the Executive Director, the CEPF Secretariat, hosted at CI, has been led by a Managing Director, who was also responsible for the technical oversight and management of grantees in the Indo-Burma hotspot. The CEPF Secretariat also comprised of two Grant Directors, one for the EAM and Cerrado hotspots each, a grants coordinator, a Senior Director of Finance and Operations, a Senior Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Outreach, and a Communications Director. This core team at the CEPF Secretariat functioned as the **Project Management Unit (PMU)**, responsible for the day-to-day execution and coordination of the overall project as well as its monitoring and oversights.



As the Executing Agency, the CEPF Secretariat was accountable to the CI-GEF Agency for the GEF funding it received under the project as well as to the CEPF Donor Council, for the contributions received from its global donor partners which formed the bulk of the co-financing for the project. The Donor Council functioned as the **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** and was the key governance mechanism for the CEPF, with the authority to select hotspots for investment, allocate budgets for grant making, and approve changes to the CEPF's Operational Manual. The Donor Council comprised of senior representatives from each of the six global donor partners of the CEPF, including GEF. In addition to the Donor Council, the project also involved the CEPF Working Group comprising of technical staff from global donor partners, which provided additional oversight by reviewing progress on project implementation, approving annual workplans, and providing technical guidance to the CEPF Secretariat on a regular as well as ad hoc basis. The CEPF Donor Council is the CEPF's global governance body and is thus responsible for key strategic planning and decision making regarding the regional and global activities of the CEPF. Key responsibilities associated with the CEPF Donor Council include the review and approval of: each Annual Spending Plan of the Fund, each Ecosystem Profile, amendments to the Operational Manual, and the fund-raising strategy of the CEPF.<sup>15</sup>

As the project's executing partners, the RITs were responsible for eight major functions<sup>16</sup>:

- a) coordinating the CEPF investment in the hotspot;
- b) supporting the grantees in the integration of biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices;
- c) communicating the CEPF investment throughout the hotspot;
- d) building the capacity of civil society;
- e) supporting the CEPF Secretariat process for solicitation and review of proposals for large grants;
- f) managing a program of small grants, in compliance with CEPF's operational manual;
- g) monitoring and evaluating the impact of large and small grants; and
- h) supporting the CEPF Secretariat to monitor the large grants portfolio and ensure compliance with CEPF funding terms

For each of the three hotspots, an organization was selected through a competitive bidding process. The CEPF Secretariat developed Terms of References and issued calls for proposals which were received and scored based on the relevant criteria. Recommendations were made to the Technical Working Group which in turn made its final recommendations to the Donor Council which approved the selection and contracting of the RIT for a given hotspot.

The majority of the project activities were executed via grants to local and international CSOs in each of the three target hotspots. The administration and management of these grants were bifurcated between the CEPF and the RITs, with the CEPF responsible for contracting and managing the larger grants while the RITs were responsible for the contracting and managing of smaller grants. The use of RITs based in their respective hotspots enabled the project to successfully coordinate and manage local civil society organizations as the RITs were deemed to

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<sup>15</sup> Source: <https://www.cepf.net/node/15743>

<sup>16</sup> Source: Terms of Reference – Regional Implementation Team (Revised September 2020). CEPF



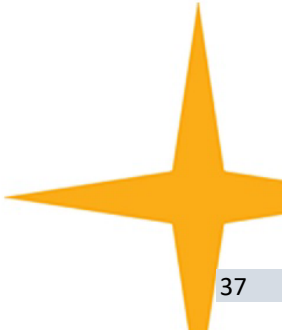
have the necessary mobility and knowledge of local contexts that a removed CEPF may not have readily access to.

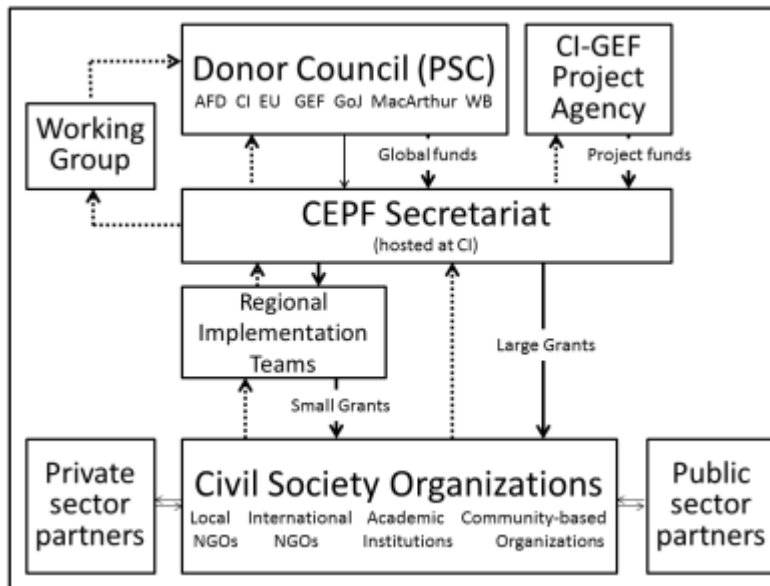
Although a two-tiered execution arrangement was implemented for the contracting, management, and execution of grants, with larger grantees contracted and managed directly by the CEPF Secretariat while the smaller grantees were contracted and managed by the RITs in each hotspot, there was significant collaboration and mutual assistance and support across the two functional units throughout the duration of the project. For instance, all three RITs, due to their proximity and in-depth knowledge of the regions and communities they are based in, were engaged by the CEPF Secretariat in consultations regarding the evaluations of proposals received against Calls for Proposals (CfP) as well as in providing trainings and guidance to large grant applicants. Similarly, the RITs also supported the CEPF Secretariat in monitoring of large grants. Conversely, the RITs also relied upon the CEPF’s expertise to be trained on the use and integration of various environmental and social safeguards that the project had institutionalized. Similarly, the CEPF Secretariat also provided support to the RITs on portfolio management to enable the RITs to strategically select grantees such that certain types of projects working in the same geographic area and/or in similar sectors could be clustered. Hence, the TE Team found that the current execution arrangements on grant management resulted in a symbiotic relationship between the CEPF and the RITs in the hotspots.

Through the local civil society organizations awarded with large or small grants, the project also indirectly worked with local communities, indigenous groups, and women groups, along with the private and public sector partners engaged by the CSOs as part of their projects. These CSOs were encouraged to design and implement their projects in close collaboration with these partners, particularly with the public and private sector stakeholders. The CSOs were fully accountable to the CEPF or the RITs for all aspects of the programmatic performance, financial management, and safeguard compliance.

The following figure depicts the overall execution arrangements of the projects with the reporting (Dotted Arrows), governance (Thin Arrows), funding (Thick Arrows) and partnership (Two-way Arrows) relationships among entities highlighted.

FIGURE 4: PROJECT EXECUTION ARRANGEMENT

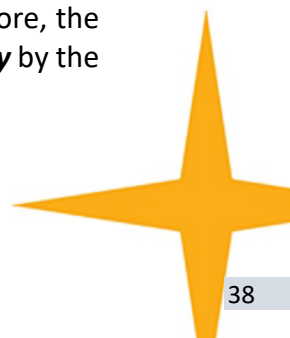




The TE Team also found that staffing at the CEPF has been adequate and consistent over the implementation of the project. In addition to a low turnover in general, most of the senior staff including the Grant Directors for the three hotspots have been remained engaged in the project from its inception to its conclusion. Furthermore, all the Grant Directors involved in the project have been managing CEPF's engagements and activities within their respective biodiversity hotspots since prior to the start of the project and throughout previous phases of the CEPF, thereby bringing substantial experience and expertise with them to the current project.

At the RIT level, various staffing modalities were observed by the TE Team. The Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil (IEB) was contracted as the RIT for the Cerrado hotspot. Early on in the project, the RIT faced challenges in the form of very limited staffing with just two personnel responsible for the day-to-day operations of the RIT's activities in the Cerrado hotspot. These challenges were not resolved until 18 months from the project's inception, when two additional staff members were recruited to cover crucial functions such as grants coordination and management, and monitoring and evaluation. Compared to the relatively leaner staffing structure for the Cerrado, the staffing structure at the IUCN Asia Regional Office, which was contracted as the RIT for the Indo-Burma hotspot, was found to be more expansive. The staff at IUCN comprised of an RIT Director, an RIT Manager, and six teams at the national-level made up of a national coordinator and a finance officer assigned for each of the six countries in the Indo-Burma hotspot on a part-time basis. The project was also supported by other IUCN staff such as communications personnel and technical experts on a time-share basis.

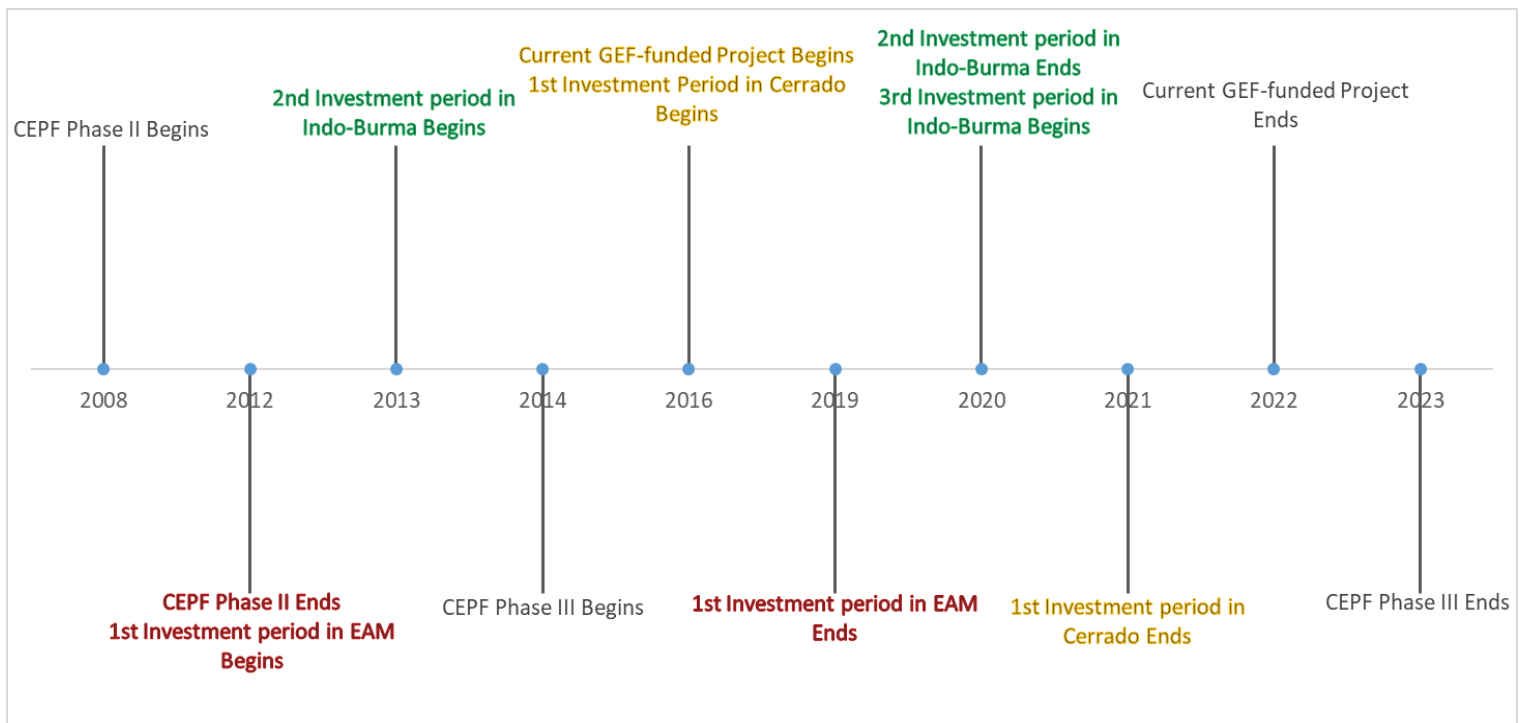
In summary, the project's overall execution arrangements are in line with the project design and GEF guidelines, largely on account of the highly experienced and seasoned staff at the CEPF as well as the recruitment of high-capacity organizations as RITs. Moreover, although some staffing challenges were faced early on in the Cerrado, these challenges were adequately addressed by the project, as indicated by a healthy staff retention and minimal staff turnover. Therefore, the project's Execution Arrangements and Quality of Execution were found to be **Satisfactory** by the TE Team.



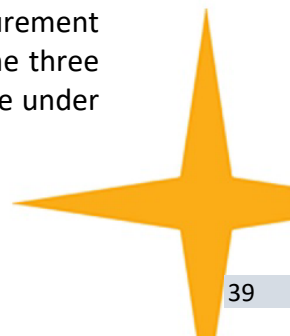
### 4.3.3 WORK PLANNING

As mentioned earlier, the three hotspots were at different stages of CEPF investment and in relation with the CEPF Strategic Frameworks. The first CEPF investment in the EAM and the second investment in Indo-Burma began in 2012 and 2013 respectively, after the conclusion of the CEPF Phase II in 2012. The current and most recent phase of the CEPF, in line with its Phase III Strategic Framework, began in 2014, two years after the investments in the EAM and Indo-Burma hotspots began. The current GEF-funded project began in 2016 which also marked the beginning of the CEPF's first ever investment in the Cerrado hotspot. The CEPF operates in five-year investment cycles; however, as a result of the GEF-funding, the life of the ongoing investment cycles in EAM and Indo-Burma were extended by two years each which resulted in the first investment cycle in EAM concluding in 2019 and the second investment cycle in Indo-Burma in 2020. The GEF-funded project provided the CEPF the opportunity to pilot components of its Phase III Strategic Framework in the EAM and Indo-Burma where it had ongoing investment at the time of project launch, as well as in a new hotspot (Cerrado) where it had no prior engagement. The CEPF's investment in the Cerrado concluded in 2021, which was the original timeframe for the conclusion of the GEF-funded project prior to its one-year extension. The following figure provides a diagrammatic representation of the timeline of the CEPF's phases, the investment cycles in each of the three hotspots, and the current GEF-funded project.

FIGURE 5: TIMELINE OF CEPF PHASES, INVESTMENT CYCLES ACROSS THE THREE HOTSPOTS, AND GEF-FUNDED PROJECT



As the key governing body of the current project, the Donor Council was responsible for key decision-making, backstopping, and approving key project documents such as the procurement plans for the three biodiversity hotspots, approving the selection of RITs for each of the three biodiversity hotspots, and endorsing the long-term visions produced as a key deliverable under



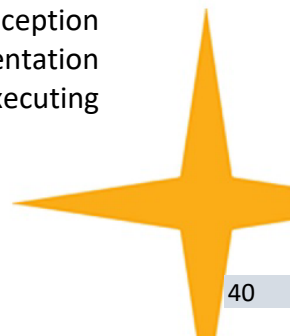
the project. As per schedule, the Donor Council met semi-annually throughout the duration of the project's implementation. However, the TE Team found that due to the significant scope of work that the Donor Council is responsible for overseeing, there were delays in gaining the required approvals early in the project's implementation that resulted in knock-on delays for other processes. For instance, there were delays in the approval of the procurement plans for the EAM hotspot which resulted in delays in the development of the long-term vision for the hotspot and in turn for the issuance of the first call for proposals (planned: Q2FY17; actual: Q1FY18) for three quarters. Similarly, endorsement for the long-term vision document for the Indo-Burma hotspot (planned: Q2FY17; actual: Q1FY18) was delayed for three quarters as the Donor Council was preoccupied with more time-sensitive activities. Despite these early delays in the approval and roll-out of associated activities, the TE Team found that the project did not suffer from major delays in its implementation (development of long-term visions, resource mobilization activities, and issuing calls for proposals and grants to CSOs) which were mostly complete even prior to the project's extension.

In March 2020, CI-GEF approved a one-year no-cost extension for the project from March 2021 to March 2022. Although grant-making had ended in the EAM in May 2020, and had largely concluded in the Indo-Burma hotspot by June 2020 (with the exception of 05 grants that were extended into FY21), grant-making in the Cerrado hotspot continued into FY21. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown and restrictions resulted in implementation delays for several grantees who requested no-cost extensions on their projects beyond the original end date of the GEF-funded projects. Moreover, while 06 of the 07 multi-hotspots grants were awarded by June 2020, implementation of these grants was also affected by the pandemic. Therefore, in order to allow sufficient time for these grants to be implemented safely and successfully, a no-cost extension to the project was approved in May 2020. An additional key factor explaining this no-cost extension was the important gains on exchange rate, in the case of the Cerrado hotspot, which provided grantees with more Reias than what the original USD amounts were expected to provide.

#### **4.3.4 PROJECT-LEVEL MONITORING SYSTEMS & REPORTING**

The project design provides a Project Results Framework that lists the project level indicators and collates indicators at the outcome and output-level under each outcome. In addition, the project document provides a comprehensive Project Results Monitoring Plan covering all outcome and output indicators included in the Results Framework, and listing specific metrics, the methodology to be undertaken to achieve indicator metrics, baseline data, location of activity, frequency of monitoring, and the responsible parties to ensure the implementation of the activity. Moreover, the Plan provides types of M&E components and activities to be undertaken at various points of the project duration and specifies the frequency of each activity as well as the associated stakeholder responsibility and indicative resources.

As the project's Executing Agency, the CEPF was responsible for ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation activities were carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and for initiating key monitoring and evaluation activities, such as initiating and organizing the project inception workshop and report, quarterly progress reporting, annual progress and implementation reporting, and documentation of lessons learned. The three RITs, as key project executing





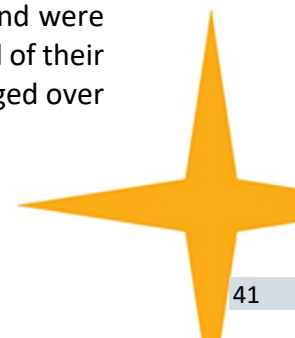
partners, were responsible for providing the requisite information, obtained from the grantees, for the timely and comprehensive completion of reporting.

A review of the available reports revealed that the CEPF has regularly provided comprehensive quarterly financial and technical reports, annual financial reports, annual workplans, as well as the annual project implementation reports as stipulated in the project document. The TE Team found the information provided in the quarterly reports particularly helpful to understand project history. Having said that, the quarterly technical reports as well as the annual project implementation reports were found to report mostly in terms of quantitative indicators as set out in the results framework which does not provide an integrated and comprehensive picture of the project's grantees and their activities. Nevertheless, the project was found to use additional methods and avenues for the dissemination of crucial qualitative information such as lessons learned and impacts of grantees' projects through the CEPF website, the websites of the RITs, the annual reports, the impact reports, and social media.

However, in addition to its quarterly and annual progress reporting obligations under the GEF-funded project, the CEPF is also responsible for producing additional reporting in the form of its annual global monitoring framework, regional portfolio level reporting, and its individual reporting to each of its 06 donor partners which varied as well. As a result, a key challenge for the CEPF has been the additional burden placed on it in terms of the quarterly technical and financial progress reports and the annual project implementation reports. The challenge was further compounded by the fact that most of the reporting for the project was done offline as its internal electronic grants management system was still under development. Challenges due to the reporting requirements have also been felt among the CSOs, most of whom are small local organizations often lacking the capacity to timely meet the requirements and submit their reports. As a result, the RITs as well as the CEPF reported the necessity to extend additional support and hands-on assistance to the smaller local organizations to guide them and provide trainings to them in order to enable them to meet donor requirements and submit reports in a timely manner. This has taken time and resources away which the RITs and CEPF could have spent on other strategic project activities.

Crucially, the project has relied on two main M&E tools to track progress against key outcome-level indicators pertaining to the grantees' organizational capacities (the Civil Society Tracking Tool) and gender mainstreaming capacities (Gender Tracking Tool). The Civil Society Tracking Tool is a bespoke CEPF tool which aims to monitor civil society organizations' capacity to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate actions for biodiversity conservation along five main axes: a) available human resources; b) available financial resources; c) availability of management systems to translate resources into effective actions; d) availability of strategic planning resources and capacities to ensure that actions target conservation priorities; and e) delivery mechanisms. Similarly, the project also developed and employed a Gender Tracking Tool to assess the extent to which gender is integrated into civil society organizations' operations and planning procedures.

The TE Team found that the tracking tools primarily relied on self-reported measures and were administered to the civil society organizations at the start of their projects and at the end of their projects to assess the extent to which scores on civil society and gender capacities changed over

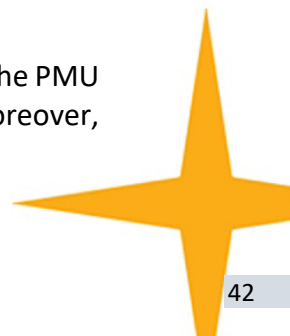


the course of the implementation period. In addition to being reviewed by the RITs, the CSTT and GTT submitted by grantees were also reviewed by the Grant Directors at the CEPF. Additional measures to reduce the likelihood of incorrect information reported included making the organizations aware that the reported information was confidential and encouraging them to use a facilitator in cases where additional support was needed to undertake the assessment. Nevertheless, the TE revealed a few methodological challenges with the use of the self-assessments primarily in the form of responder bias as well as varying levels of reliability. In particular, interviews with RITs revealed that responder bias resulted in inflated scores on gender and civil society tracking tools that were not reflective of the actual capabilities in some of the grantees' cases. Moreover, interviews with RITs revealed that the tracking tools were often filled by different CSO staff at the start and end of projects which resulted in discrepancies due to disparate judgements exercised by the different staff members. In the case of EAM, the RIT took steps to address this issue by having some grantees revisit their CSTT forms submitted at the start of the grant and revise their scores.

Despite efforts at capacity building, it was found that at least 14 organizations (11%) showed a decrease in their final scores on the civil society tracking tool compared to their baseline scores, which may be a consequence of the abovementioned issues in some of these instances. Other factors that influenced a decrease in CSTT scores pertained to common capacity challenges faced by local CSOs such as staff turnover and loss of funding. Nevertheless, these tracking tools were utilized by the RITs to identify which grantees required additional support in which specific focal areas. On this basis, additional support and training were provided to grantees who scored lower in order to further bolster their capacities. In addition to these tracking tools aimed at CSOs, the project also utilized the standard Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) which was administered to the protected area managers at various intervals during the project's implementation. The METT was administered in those protected areas where grantees were implementing projects aimed specifically to improve protected area management.

In addition, some impact-level indicators such as the total area of production landscapes, protected areas, and conservation corridors implementing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use were also based on self-reported data obtained from the grantees. The TE Team found that in some cases, such as in the EAM and the Cerrado hotspots, a more in-depth and detailed verification exercise was conducted by the RIT to verify the area in hectares which were being implemented using biodiversity conservation and sustainable use mechanisms. BirdLife International (EAM) and the IEB (Cerrado) utilized geospatial data obtained from its grantees as well as during its own monitoring missions and overlapped digital mapping tools to validate the boundaries and calculate the total area under which various conservation projects were implemented. This validation approach conducted at the end of the CEPF's investment cycle in the EAM and Cerrado allowed the RIT to verify the self-report data provided by the grantees and lent greater credibility and confidence to the results reported under the project. The TE found that additional validation measures were utilized by the RITs in the case of the Cerrado and Indo-Burma hotspots by requesting grantees to provide official government documents and maps of protected areas or agreements with communities to co-manage forests or fisheries.

In summary, the project's M&E was **Satisfactory** at design. Also, during implementation the PMU has ensured that the different mechanisms dictating the M&E framework are in place. Moreover,



key reports of good quality have been delivered on time. However, challenges have been reported by the RITs on the use of self-assessment measures along with the expenditure of additional time and resources towards supporting grantees in meeting requirements which have posed efficiency challenges. Consequently, the M&E during implementation is rated **Satisfactory**.

**4.3.5 FINANCE AND CO-FINANCE**

The Project was funded by a USD 10 million GEF grant, with USD 9.8 million in GEF project funding to cover Components 2, 3, and 4 of the project as well as the associated project management costs, and USD 0.2 million in PPG Funding. Of the GEF Grant, the largest allocation of 59% was made to Component 3 of the project, followed by Component 2 (26%) and Component 4 (10%). As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the project has spent a total of USD 9,772,262 (99.7%) of its allocated amount of USD 9.8 million. Across components, the project has slightly overspent on Component 3 by USD 32,116, whereas 99% of the funds allocated for Component 2 have been spent and 96% of the funds allocated for Component 4 have been spent. Lastly, of the USD 490,000 allocated to cover the project management costs, 99% has been expended. The table below outlines the GEF Fund amounts allocated and expended across components as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

**TABLE 5: GEF FUND AMOUNTS ALLOCATED AND EXPENDED BY COMPONENT AS OF 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2022**

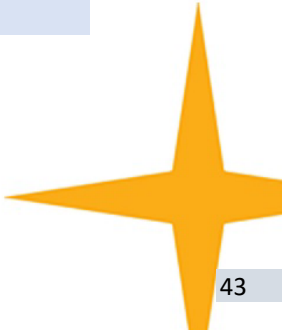
	GEF Grant Amount Allocated (USD)	Percent of Total Allocation	Expenditure as of 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022 (USD)	Percentage of Total Allocated Spent
<b>Component 1</b>	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Component 2</b>	2,524,595	26%	2,508,260	99%
<b>Component 3</b>	5,812,179	59%	5,844,295	101%
<b>Component 4</b>	973,226	10%	935,097	96%
<b>Project Management Costs</b>	490,000	05%	484,610	99%
<b>TOTAL</b>	9,800,000	100%	9,772,262	99.7%

Component 1 was entirely co-financed through the co-funding received from donor partners who also contributed to other components of the project. The project has a total of eight co-financing partners with a total cumulative co-financing of USD 84.5 million in cash. As the following table outlines, the European Union (USD 19,207,285) is the largest contributor of co-funding to the project at 23%, followed by the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation (USD 15,000,000) and the Government of Japan (USD 14,813,000) at 18% each, and closely followed by Conservation International (USD 14,000,000) at 17%.

**TABLE 6: CO-FINANCING PROPOSED AND MATERIALIZED ACROSS DIFFERENT SOURCES**

Name of Co-Financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (USD)	Percent of Total	Amount Materialized (USD) <sup>17</sup>	Percentage of Allocated Amount Materialized
<b>Conservation International</b>	Cash	14,000,000	17%	14,696,589	105%
<b>European Union</b>	Cash	19,207,285	23%	26,560,641	138%

<sup>17</sup> As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022



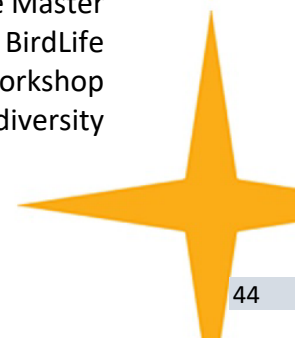
<b>Government of Japan</b>	Cash	14,813,000	18%	428,152	03%
<b>Helmsley Foundation</b>	Cash	900,000	1%	900,000	100%
<b>MacArthur Foundation</b>	Cash	11,850,000	14%	6,471,000	55%
<b>Margaret A. Cargill Foundation</b>	Cash	15,000,000	18%	18,225,928	122%
<b>MAVA Foundation</b>	Cash	1,129,715	1%	3,392,751	300%
<b>World Bank</b>	Cash	7,600,000	9%	7,600,000	100%
<b>Agence française de développement</b>	Cash	N/A at Design		17,415,073	N/A
<b>Other</b>	Cash	N/A at Design		1,999,746	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>		84,500,000	100%	97,689,881	116%

As indicated by the table above, 116% of the total co-financing for the project has materialized. At the donor level, while only 03% of the co-funding by the Government of Japan materialized, the project was successful in not just making up the shortfall, but also exceeding the co-financing amount at design, by obtaining additional funding from existing donors such as the European Union (138%), Margaret A. Cargill Foundation (122%), Conservation International (105%) and the MAVA Foundation (300%) as well as seeking additional donors and co-funding sources for USD 17,415,073 through the Agence française de développement (AFD) and other grants, despite facing a shortfall due to the materialization just 55% of the co-financing from MacArthur Foundation, which closed its global Program on Biodiversity in FY19. Therefore, the TE Team found the project co-financing to be highly satisfactory as the total co-financing had successfully materialized, with the shortfalls from an original commitment compensated for by garnering significant co-financing from existing and new sources.

#### 4.3.6 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Under the project, stakeholder engagement has been an ongoing process to ensure that the project relates better to the local context and creates proactive partnerships that enhance sustainability of the project results after GEF funding ceases. In particular, as the Executing Agency and key executing partners respectively, the CEPF and the RITs are responsible for ensuring that various project stakeholders such as civil society organizations and through them the public and private sector partners are engaged effectively throughout the project implementation period.

In addition to conducting trainings on the projects' environmental and social safeguards and other requirements, some RITs also supported the grantees during the application stage. BirdLife International conducted a series of 'Master Class' workshops with shortlisted applicants to better prepare them for getting their proposals through the final stage and submitting all the required documentation in an effective manner. Three Master Class workshops were conducted by BirdLife International after each successive call for proposals for the EAM hotspot. These Master Class workshops were held in person in Rwanda, Kenya, and Tanzania where BirdLife International has local presence and shortlisted applicants were invited for a five day workshop to go over modules covering project design and proposal writing, financial management, diversity



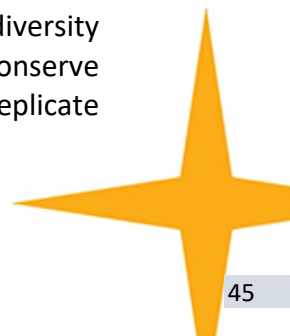
and inclusion, communications and networking, and reporting. BirdLife International used various tools such as theory-based lectures and combined them with practical demonstrations and exercises to facilitate the learning process. A key lesson learned from implementing this practice was that applicants who had undergone the Master Class workshops not only had improved project proposals and designs, but also required less support and handholding later during the implementation stage of the projects compared to those applicants who did not attend. As a result, the MTR of the current project recommended that this approach be replicated by other RITs in the two hotspots that the project targeted. Drawing from the experiences of the Master Classes first piloted in the EAM, a three-day workshop was organized by the CEPF and IUCN ARO for 14 civil society organizations in Cambodia in February 2020 which covered project design, proposal writing, and gender mainstreaming; a second Master Class for organizations in the Indo-Burma Hotspot was held virtually in March 2021. The Master Class served as one of the six knowledge products developed under the current project and their use was subsequently replicated in the Guinean Forests of West Africa hotspot.

The TE also found differences in approaches used by the RITs in stakeholder engagement which also highlights the flexibility provided to RITs. All RITs were found to have facilitated knowledge exchange and learning amongst the grantees through workshops held as part of the mid-term and/or final assessment of CEPF's portfolios in the three hotspots. Additional stakeholder engagement efforts were also observed in some instances. For the Cerrado hotspot, this was done through the creation of four Regional Hubs comprising of project grantees whose projects were clustered in specific regions of the Cerrado hotspots. Through the establishment of Regional Hubs, IEB aimed to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and expertise amongst the grantees and to foster greater cooperation amongst grantees and stakeholders working in a specific region in the Cerrado. IEB also evaluated the number of entities mobilized by the grantees in the hotspot and counted 567 of them. Similarly, IUCN through the current project also facilitated in the creation of the Lower Mekong Network, a coalition of various organizations operating in countries across the Indo-Burma hotspot on conservation and development issues. IUCN has engaged with the Lower Mekong Network through a formal partnership and continued to coordinate more closely with the Network to explore synergies and share information, experiences, and learnings. More recently, IUCN is also playing a supporting role in organizing an in-person workshop with the Network. Therefore, the TE Team found that the RITs have successfully engaged stakeholders to foster greater cooperation between them and form partnerships to leverage support and resources towards biodiversity conservation.

#### **4.4 PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS**

This section provides an outcome-wise and output-level analysis of the project's progress towards achieving results. In accordance with the TE guidelines, outcome ratings are also provided while taking into account the project's relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency and achievements against its expected targets.

The objective of the project was "to demonstrate innovative tools, methodologies and investments, and build related capacities, through which civil society in three pilot biodiversity hotspots, in partnership with public and private sector actors, can cost-effectively conserve biodiversity and progress towards long-term institutional sustainability, and to replicate



demonstrated approaches in nine additional hotspots.” Table 07 provides an overview of the progress against objective indicators, as of the TE.

**TABLE 7: PROGRESS ON OBJECTIVE INDICATORS**

Indicators	Target	Progress till TE
<b>a) Number of long-term conservation visions and financing plans for biodiversity hotspots developed and implemented with clear targets for CEPF graduation and endorsed by civil society, government, donor and/or private sector actors</b>	03 long term visions developed and 10 endorsements received	03 long-term visions, one in each hotspot developed; overall 46 endorsements received
<b>b) Number of civil societies and CEPF grantees in the pilot hotspots that improve their financial and institutional sustainability</b>	60 grantees, including 05 Indigenous People’s groups and 05 Women’s groups show 10% improvement in institutional capacity	52 grantees (and also 14 mentees) including 11 Indigenous People’s organizations and 1 women’s group, with 10% improvement over duration of project
<b>c) Total area of production landscapes, protected areas, and conservation corridors implementing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use</b>	1,000,000 hectares of production landscape under biodiversity mainstreaming	<b>Production landscapes:</b> 2,221,847 hectares (1,294,358 ha in Cerrado, 851,795 ha in EAM, and 75,694 ha in Indo-Burma)  <b>Protected Areas:</b> 2,848,116 ha (1,848,911 ha in the Cerrado, 752,987 ha in EAM, and 246,218 ha in Indo-Burma)  <b>Conservation corridors:</b> 6,668,562 hectares (3,440,628 ha in the Cerrado, 1,473,234 ha in the EAM, and 1,754,700 ha in Indo-Burma)
<b>d) Number of policy demonstration models and management best practices adopted in number of additional biodiversity hotspots</b>	02 policy demonstrations models and 02 management best practices adopted in at least one additional hotspots	04 (best practices for: mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into rice cultivation; community-based fish conservation zone; Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) identification; and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the operations of Chinese companies)

As noted in the Results Framework section, the project’s objective level indicators were identical to many of its outcome level indicators spread across the four project components. In addition,



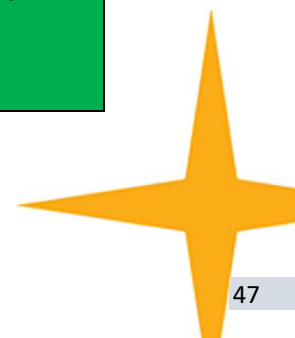
targets were not established against these objective indicators but can be discerned from the targets established in the outcome-level indicators on which they are based. The following component-wise analysis provides an in-depth assessment of the achievement of the objective-level indicators.

#### 4.4.1 COMPONENT 1 – LONG-TERM VISIONS

Under Component 1, the project sought to develop **long-term vision** for each of the target biodiversity hotspots along with their associated financing plans and strategies. Component 1 comprises of a single outcome, which is in turn composed of four outputs corresponding to various components of the long-term visions. For instance, Output 1.1.1 relates to the **establishment of targets for civil society capacity building** for each of the three hotspots that would enable CEPF to determine when a hotspot ‘graduates’ from CEPF’s support. Similarly, Output 1.1.2 relates to the **development of financing plans** describing the funding and projections defined for the implementation of the long-term visions. Furthermore, Output 1.1.3 seeks to incorporate **targets for sector and/or development policies** to address key drivers of biodiversity loss in the three pilot hotspots. Lastly, Output 1.1.4 aims to develop **strategies for engagement with the private sector** actors in each biodiversity hotspot for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into business practices of various industries. The following table outlines the Outcome-level indicators associated with the Outcome and reports the progress made by the project towards their actualization.

TABLE 8: PROGRESS ON INDICATORS UNDER OUTCOME 1.1 (AS OF 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

Outcome 1.1: Long-term conservation visions developed for the Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane, and Indo-Burma Hotspots, with participation of civil society, government, donor and private sector actors				
Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress till TE	Progress Rating
Outcome Indicator 1.1.1: Number of long-term visions incorporating resource mobilization strategies that support the mobilization of new funding, and policy targets addressing key drivers of biodiversity loss and guiding the development of new policy demonstration models	0 long-term visions	3 long-term visions incorporating resource mobilization strategies and policy targets	3 long-term vision, incorporating resource mobilization strategy and policy targets	Completed
Outcome indicator 1.1.2: Number of hotspots with clear targets for graduation of civil society from CEPF support	0 pilot hotspots with graduation targets	3 pilot hotspots with graduation targets	3 pilot hotspots with graduation targets	Completed
Outcome indicator 1.1.3: Number of civil society, government, donor and/or private sector actors that	0 endorsements of long-term visions	10 endorsements of the long-term visions	46 endorsements of the long-term visions.	Completed



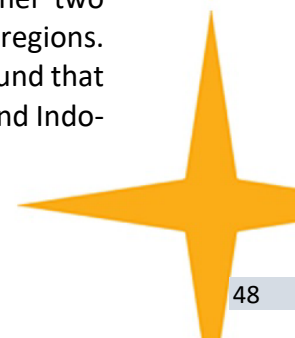
endorse the long-term visions			(37 endorsements for Cerrado; 06 endorsements for EAM; and 03 endorsements for Indo-Burma)	
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Overall, the project successfully delivered on Outcome 1.1 by developing a long-term vision document for each of the three pilot hotspots that have incorporated graduation targets for civil society (Output 1.1.1), included the associated financing plans for each of the hotspot (Output 1.1.2), and incorporated a set of sector and development policy targets (Output 1.1.3) as well as strategies for private sector engagement to mainstream biodiversity conservation (Output 1.1.4). The long-term vision for Indo-Burma was completed and endorsed in FY18 which was followed by the EAM during FY19 and the Cerrado during FY21. Despite some early challenges in the form of delays in gaining the necessary approvals for prerequisite procurement plans for the EAM hotspot along with delays in the development of the long-term vision in the Cerrado due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was successful in delivering the long-term visions within the stipulated timeframe of the project.

Prior to this GEF-funded project, CEPF piloted its Long-Term Visions by developing long-term visions for three areas between 2015 and 2017: the Balkans subregion of the Mediterranean Basin hotspot, the Albertine Rift and Eastern Arc Mountains subregion of the EAM, and the Indo-Burma hotspot. The long-term vision for the EAM was developed in June 2015. However, there were significant challenges associated with the first long-term vision document for EAM in the form of being too broad in its scope and challenges around convening a broad range of relevant stakeholders to participate in the process. As a result, under this project, a second updated version of the long-term vision, focusing on four countries in the hotspot (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda), was developed for the EAM. The long-term visions developed for the Cerrado and Indo-Burma were the CEPF’s first attempts for such a vision in these hotspots.

Interviews conducted during the TE revealed that the development of the long-term visions for each of the hotspots were considered valuable for the CEPF and the RITs to shift their thinking from shorter five-year project cycles to longer-term strategizing, in line with the objectives of the CEPF Phase III Strategic Framework. Moreover, these long-term visions are the products of a consultative and participatory process involving a broad range of stakeholders represented by civil society organizations, the public sector, private sector, and international donor communities.

However, it was noted that the extent to which the long-term visions were endorsed by other organizations such as civil society and donors varied between the three hotspots. For instance, the long-term visions for the Indo-Burma and EAM hotspots received significantly fewer endorsements (03 and 06, respectively) than the long-term vision for the Cerrado (37 endorsements). This is despite the fact that the CEPF has been operating in the former two hotspots prior to the current project and has a long history of engaging civil society in the regions. To this end, an evaluation of the CEPF’s long-term vision exercises, conducted in 2018, found that limited donor engagement and ownership in the long-term vision exercises in the EAM and Indo-





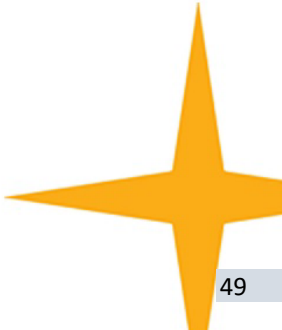
Burma hotspots reduced the relevance of the long-term vision for donors in these hotspots. The broad scope of the long-term visions along with their regional focus are considered to be constraining factors for their uptake and usability among civil society organizations. This was particularly the case for the first long-term vision for the EAM which spanned a total of 07 countries and was not detailed enough in clearly differentiating national contexts. Although this was rectified to some extent in the subsequent long-term vision developed under the current project by reducing the number of countries to 04 and presenting a more detailed national-level picture, the diversity of issues and stakeholders across countries within the region was found to necessitate a narrower scope to be more useful to civil society organizations. Moreover, interviews with the RITs also revealed that there was apprehension among civil society organizations in the hotspots regarding the CEPF withdrawing from a hotspot which may have also contributed to fewer endorsements. Lessons learned from the first pilot LTVs were applied to subsequent LTV exercises, including in Cerrado, which contributed to the wider endorsement received for the LTV in that hotspot.

The long-term vision established graduation targets for civil society to reach the point where they achieve sufficient organizational and technical capacity to graduate from CEPF support. The TE revealed that all RITs were unanimous in their assessment that although progress has been made in that regard, a significant amount of effort was still needed to graduate the hotspots from CEPF support. Having said that, the expected timeframes were seen to vary across the target hotspots with the Cerrado having a relatively shorter roadmap for transitioning from CEPF support to local funding sources and implementation structures given the relative strength of civil society in terms of capacity. Conversely, the long-term vision identified a longer timeframe of 15 to 20 years for the Indo-Burma hotspot to transition away from CEPF support, and in the case of EAM, the long-term vision also revealed the need for sustained engagement by CEPF to strengthen civil society capacity in responding to biodiversity conservation challenges.

In summary, the project successfully delivered on Outcome 1.1 as well as the 04 Outputs associated with it by developing long-term visions for each of the three hotspots containing graduation targets for civil society, associated financing plans, targets for policy demonstration, and targets for private sector engagement. Moreover, the project was successful in receiving a total of 46 endorsements for the developed long-term visions against an overall target of 10 endorsements despite the long-term visions for the Indo-Burma and EAM hotspots receiving disproportionately fewer endorsements compared to that of the Cerrado hotspot. While the long-term visions were considered more relevant for the CEPF and the RITs tasked with stewarding their implementation, their relevance to other donors as well as civil society organizations was found to be relatively more limited. Therefore, based on the assessment of the TE Team, the following ratings are provided for Outcome 1.1 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

**TABLE 9: OUTCOME 1.1 RATING**

Criteria	Rating
<b>Relevance</b>	Satisfactory
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Satisfactory
<b>Efficiency</b>	Satisfactory
<b>Overall Outcome Rating</b>	Satisfactory

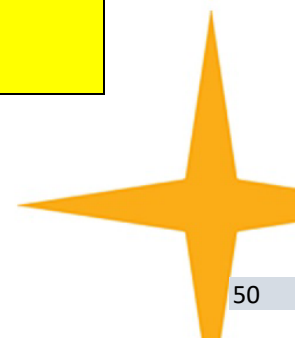


#### 4.4.2 COMPONENT 2 – FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRAMS

Component 2 aimed to ensure the financial and institutional sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs by: a) increasing the **capacity and credibility of conservation-focused civil society** in the three hotspots (Outcome 2.1); and b) achieving **increased and sustained financial flows** to civil society from diverse sources (Outcome 2.2). Outcome 2.1 was in turn composed of two outputs pertaining to the establishment of long-term implementation structures in the three hotspots (Output 2.1.1) and capacitating civil society in the three hotspots in terms of their organizational and technical capacities (Output 2.1.1). The following table outlines the Outcome-level indicators associated with the Outcome and reports the progress made by the project towards their actualization.

TABLE 10: PROGRESS ON INDICATORS UNDER OUTCOME 2.1 (AS OF 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

Outcome 2.1: Increased capacity and credibility of conservation-focused civil societies in the Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane and Indo-Burma Hotspots				
Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress till TE	Progress Rating
Outcome indicator 2.1.1: Number of pilot hotspots that show at least <b>20% improvement in collective civil society capacity</b> tracking tool scores	0 pilot hotspots with 20% improvement over duration of project	3 pilot hotspots with 20% improvement over duration of project	3 pilot hotspots with 20% improvement over duration of project	<b>Completed</b>
Outcome indicator 2.1.2: Number of CEPF grantees, number of Indigenous People's organizations and number of women's groups that show at least <b>10% improvement in civil society</b>	0 grantees, including 0 Indigenous People's organizations and 0 women's groups, with 10% improvement over duration of project	60 grantees, including at least 5 Indigenous People's organizations and 5 women's groups, with 10% improvement over duration of project	52 grantees (and also 14 mentees) including 11 Indigenous People's organizations and 1 women's group, with 10% improvement over duration of project	<b>Partially Met</b>

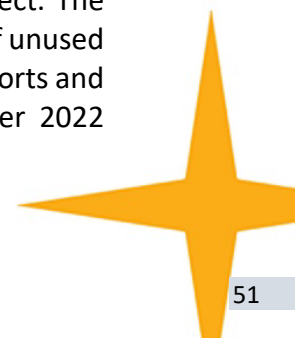


tracking tool scores				
Outcome indicator 2.1.3: Number of CEPF grantees that show at least <b>20% improvement in gender mainstreaming</b> tracking tool scores	0 grantees with 20% improvement over duration of project	30 grantees with 20% improvement over duration of project	57 grantees (and also 08 mentees) with 20% improvement over duration of project	<b>Completed</b>

Under Outcome 2.1, the project contracted three organizations to act in the capacity of the RITs: BirdLife International in the EAM, IUCN ARO in Indo-Burma, and the IEB in the Cerrado hotspot. These organizations were selected based on a competitive process through the issuance of calls for proposals on the basis of which their proposals were evaluated and scored by the CEPF. The CEPF then submitted its recommendation to the Donor Council which was charged with approving the RITs for the current project.

Overall, the TE found that all three organizations had strong technical and institutional capacities as well as prior grant-making experience which positioned them to be effective RITs. To further bolster their capacities, the CEPF provided all three RITs with technical assistance to enable them to better manage and implement the project. In particular, all three RITs were provided trainings and support in furthering their understanding of and capacity to effectively implement the project's various safeguards and gender integration components. In addition to providing targeted trainings to the RITs, the CEPF also facilitated and supported the trainings that the RITs provided to their grantees on effective integration, development, and implementation of safeguards in their projects. Furthermore, CEPF also provided technical assistance and trainings to the RITs regarding portfolio management to increase transformational impact of the grants by leveraging synergies between complementary grants working in specific sectors and regions of the hotspots.

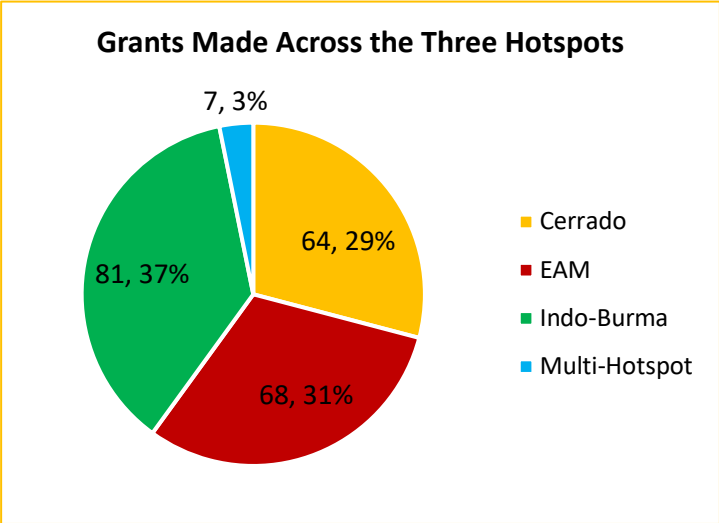
However, the TE Team found that, by its conclusion, the project was successful in transitioning one of its RITs towards becoming a long-term implementation structure (Output Indicator 2.1.1). Although the ToRs for the RITs in Indo-Burma and EAM hotspots were amended to enable IUCN ARO and BirdLife International to begin instituting the necessary changes and explore long-term funding sources, the process was more successful in the Indo-Burma hotspot where funding was secured from CEPF and other sources to maintain IUCN as the implementing structure for at least five more years. Funding for BirdLife International to maintain it as a long-term implementing structure in the EAM could not be secured despite efforts to source the requisite funds. Similarly, in the case of Cerrado, the CEPF and IEB are exploring efforts to transform the RIT into a long-term implementation structure and enable it to continue beyond the end of the project. The project's one year extension (from March 2021 to March 2022) along with reallocation of unused funds from grantees has provided some funding to the IEB to continue its fundraising efforts and to develop its Cerrado strategy in alignment with the long-term vision till November 2022



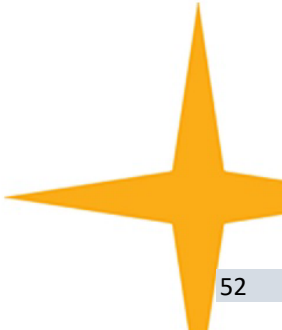
through a no-cost extension. As of the TE, the IEB has received a project preparation grant of USD 50,000 from GEF to work on the elaboration of their full project proposal of USD 1.8 million for a four year period. Given that the IEB had entered the PPG stage, there is a high likelihood of it receiving funding which will enable the IEB to continue acting as the long-term implementation structure in the Cerrado hotspot. Therefore, it is highly likely that two of the three pilot hotspots will have long-term implementation structures in place to continue stewarding the CEPF’s long-term visions.

Over the course of the project between 2016 and 2021, a total of 220 grants were made to 181 civil society organizations across the three hotspots, of which 147 were local civil society organizations (81%) while 34 were international organizations (19%). The following presents an overview of the grants and civil society organizations awarded under the project.

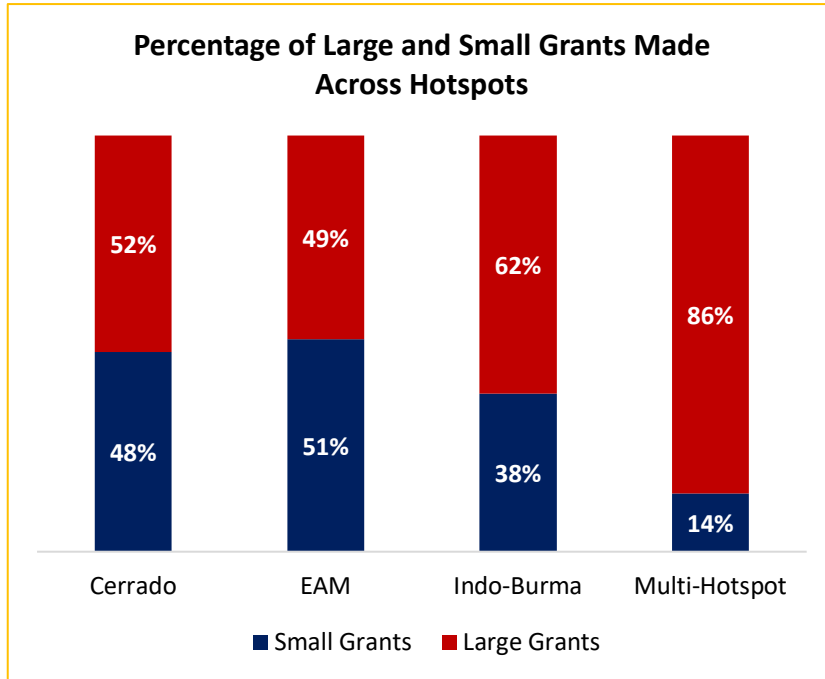
FIGURE 6: NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED ACROSS HOTSPOTS



In the **Cerrado**, a total of 64 grants were awarded to 56 civil society organizations, with 08 organizations (14%) receiving multiple grants. Of these 64 grants, 31 grants were classified as small grants (48%) under the value of USD 50,000 while 33 grants were large grants (52%) greater than or equal to the value of USD 50,000. Of the 56 civil society organizations, 54 grantees were local organizations (96%). The overall average value of the grants awarded to organizations amounted to USD 106,351, with the average small grant equaling USD 30,740 and the average large grant equaling USD 177,380. The average grant amount to local civil society groups equaled USD 106,011 while the average grant to international civil society organizations equaled USD 116,872.



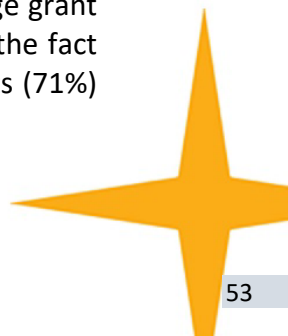
**FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGE OF LARGE AND SMALL GRANTS AWARDED ACROSS HOTSPOTS**



In the **EAM**, a total of 68 grants were awarded to 56 civil society organizations, with 12 civil society organizations (21%) receiving multiple grants. Of these 68 grants, 35 grants were classified as small grants (51%) under the value of USD 20,000 while 33 grants were classified as large grants (49%) greater than or equal to USD 20,000. Of these 56 civil society organizations, 41 organization were local organizations (73%) while 15 grantees were international organizations (27%). Of the 41 local organizations, 19

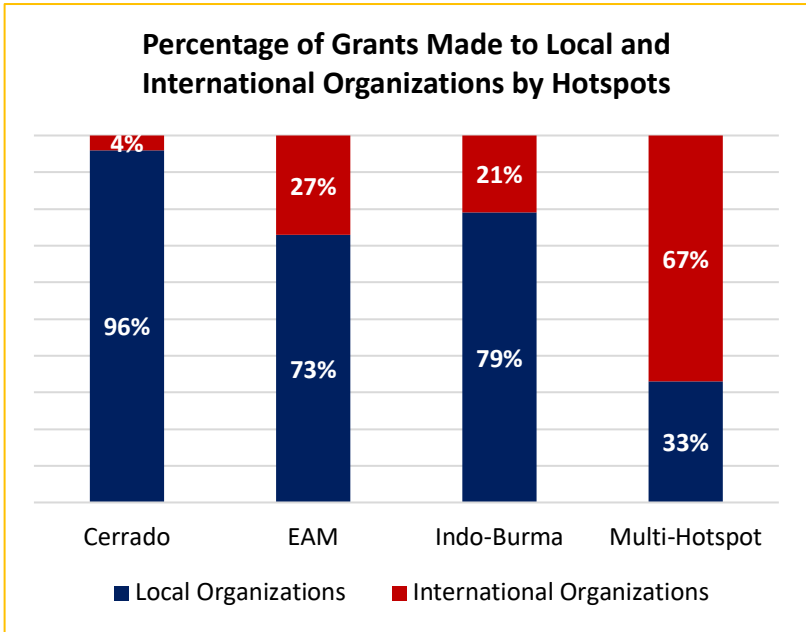
organizations (46%) received a small grant, 18 organizations (44%) received a large grant, while the remaining 04 local organizations (10%) received multiple grants both large and small in size. Of the 15 international organizations, 09 organizations (60%) received small grants and 06 organizations (40%) received large grants. The overall average value of the grants awarded to organizations amounted to USD 43,570, with the average small grant equaling USD 14,989 and the average large grant equaling USD 73,883. The average grant amount to local civil society groups equaled USD 45,663 while the average grant to international civil society organizations equaled USD 38,173 which is reflective of the fact that interestingly, a higher proportion of international organizations received small grants (60%) than did local organizations (46%).

The **Indo-Burma** hotspot had the largest number of grants awarded with a total of 81 grants awarded to 67 civil society organizations, with 14 organizations (21%) receiving multiple grants. Of these 81 grants, 31 grants (38%) were classified as small grants under the value of USD 20,000 while 50 grants (62%) were classified as large grants with a value greater than or equal to USD 20,000. Of these 67 grantees, 53 grantees were local civil society organizations (79%) while the remaining 14 grantees (21%) were international organizations. Of the 53 local grantees, 23 organizations (43%) received small grants, 28 organizations (53%) received large grants, and 02 organizations (04%) received multiple grants both small and large in size. Of the 14 international organizations, 02 grantees (14%) received small grants, 10 organizations (71%) received large grants, and 02 organizations (14%) received multiple grants both small and large in size. The overall average value of the grants awarded to organizations equaled USD 62,404, with the average small grant equaling USD 19,318 and the average large grant equaling USD 89,118. The average grant amount to local civil society groups equaled USD 41,071 while the average grant to international civil society organizations equaled USD 116,202, which is reflective of the fact that a higher proportion of international civil society organizations received large grants (71%) compared to the proportion of local civil society groups receiving large grants (53%).



Lastly, a total of 07 grants were granted for **multi-hotspot level** projects to 06 grantees, with 01 organization (17%) receiving two multi-hotspot level grants. Of these 07 grants, only 01 (14%) was classified as a small grant under the value of USD 20,000 which was awarded to an international organization, while the remaining 06 grants (86%) were large grants greater than or equal to USD 20,000. Of the 06 grantees, 02 grantees were local civil society organizations (33%) while the remaining 04 grantees (67%) were international organizations. The overall average grant amount was USD 85,563 with local organizations receiving an average grant of USD 95,458 and international organizations receiving grants averaging USD 81,607.

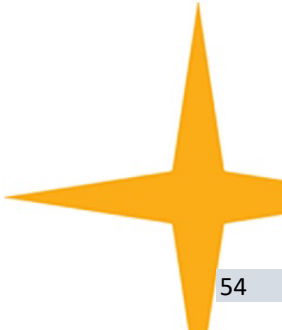
**FIGURE 9: PERCENTAGE OF GRANTS AWARDED TO SMALL AND LARGE ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS HOTSPOTS**

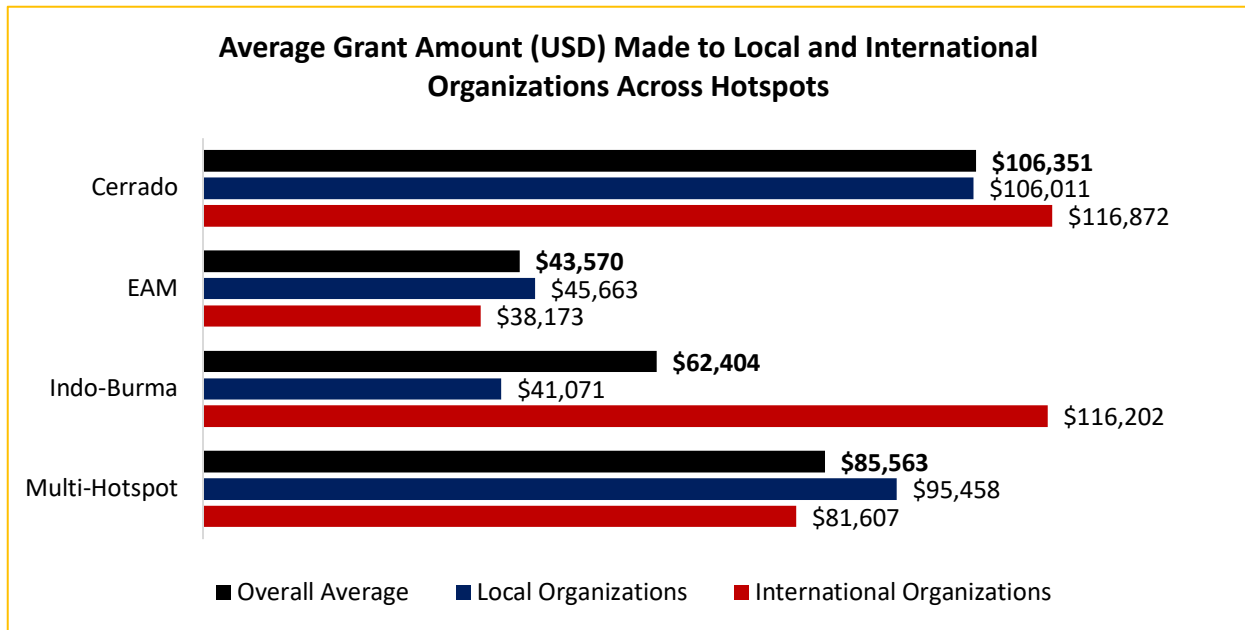


Overall, the TE found that, an overwhelming majority of grants in the Cerrado hotspot were awarded to local civil society groups (96%). In comparison, a slightly higher proportion of grantees across Indo-Burma (79%) comprised of local civil society organizations compared to EAM (71%). Moreover, a higher proportion of the local civil society organizations in Indo-Burma (53%) received a large grant compared to that of EAM (44%). However, the average grant amount to local civil society organizations in the EAM (USD

45,663) was found to be slightly higher than the average grant amount to local civil society organizations in Indo-Burma. Furthermore, a significantly higher proportion of international organizations in the EAM (60%) actually received a small grant, compared to the international organizations in Indo-Burma (14%) as a result of which the average grant value awarded to international organizations in the Indo-Burma (USD 116,202) was found to be just over 3 times larger than the average grant award to international organizations in the EAM (USD 38,173).

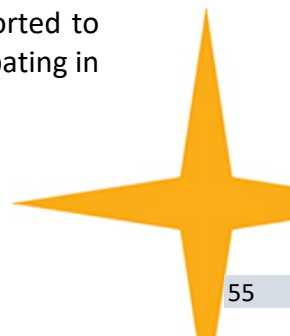
**FIGURE 9: AVERAGE GRANT AWARDED TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS HOTSPOTS**





As noted earlier, some organizations were successful in receiving multiple CEPF grants over the duration of the current GEF-funded project. For instance, ECOA in the Cerrado has been successful in diversifying its activities to include forest restoration as well as development of women leader networks operating on agro-ecology and climate change issues in the Cerrado. This allowed such organizations to develop synergies across their portfolios and address multiple focal areas of conservation work within the same Hotspot. Similarly, the CEPF grants also functioned as a stepping-stone for organizations that were previously engaged in similar conservation work but on a smaller scale and scope. Furthermore, in some cases, the grantees have been able to progress from smaller grants to larger grants. This was observed in the case of Friends of Wildlife, a local organization based in Myanmar, which received four small sized grants from the CEPF between 2016 and 2019 which varied between USD 1,500 and USD 4,000, but were successful in receiving a large grant of USD 20,000 in 2018.

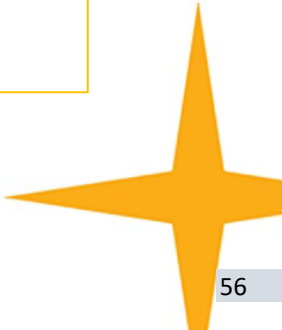
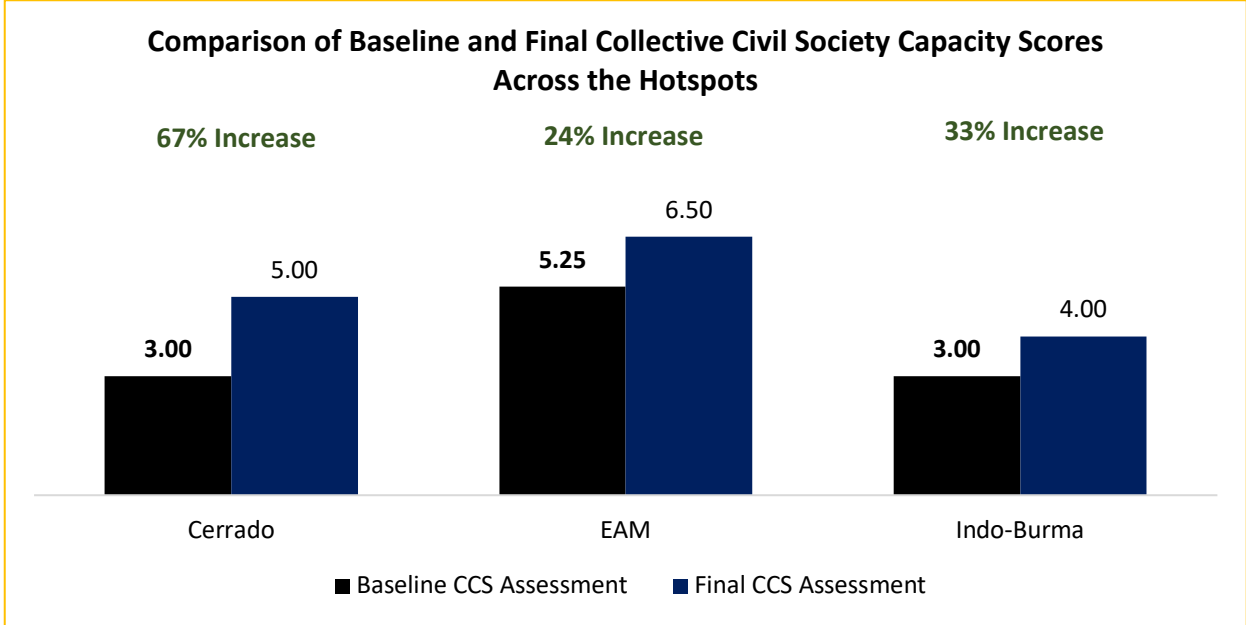
The TE revealed that the RITs provided significant support to the grantees, particularly as the former were responsible for managing the small grants component in their respective hotspots. Accordingly, all RITs provided trainings to their grantees on facilitating their understanding and improving skills regarding the use of the project’s grants management systems and processes in place, incorporating and effectively implementing the project’s safeguards, gender mainstreaming, and stakeholder engagement plans into projects. Similarly, training sessions were held by the CEPF on the technical and financial reporting requirements in place for the RITs to effectively report on the project’s progress to CI-GEF and its donors. Particularly, in the case of EAM and to some extent in the Indo-Burma hotspot, the Master Class workshops invited shortlisted applicants to undergo training and capacity building exercises covering project design and proposal writing, financial management, diversity and inclusion, communications and networking, and reporting to strengthen their proposals before final submission, as elaborated in the Stakeholder Engagement section above. The Master Class workshops were reported to have particularly improved the quality of proposals and reporting by the cohorts participating in them.



The TE found that the sheer diversity of the grantees, especially amongst the local civil society groups, often necessitated significant support and effort to be expended to cater to the grantees. As the project worked with a significant number of local civil society organizations, many of them lacked the institutional knowledge, skills and infrastructure in place to effectively meet the requirements of the project in terms of reporting and accounting and management systems. This was found to place significant burden on the RITs as such organizations required additional training and hands-on support to support them throughout the implementation of their projects which spread their own resources and capacities thin.

The results of the capacity building activities were measured primarily through three assessments: a) the collective civil society assessment; b) Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT); and c) the Gender Tracking Tool (GTT). Based on an analysis of the collective civil society assessments, the TE found that **overall all three pilot hotspots showed improvements in collective civil society capacity scores compared to the baseline scores** (Outcome Indicator 2.1.1). For the Cerrado hotspot, the initial baseline score of 0 was revised to 03 after the mid-term assessment in April 2019. By the end of the project, the collective civil society capacity score for the hotspot had increase to 05 which represent a 67% improvement over the revised baseline. For the EAM, a composite baseline score of 5.25 was calculated based on the average of the individual scores for Kenya (7), Rwanda (5), Tanzania (2) and Uganda (7). The final scores improved to a combined average of 6.5, representing a 24% improvement over baseline score, primarily due to the increase in civil society capacity in Kenya (final score of 10) and Tanzania (final score of 05). Lastly, the Indo-Burma hotspot’s civil society capacity baseline score was set at 03 which improved to 04, representing a 33% improvement in collective civil society capacity in the hotspot. In conclusion, **while the largest gains in civil society capacity were seen in the Cerrado (67%), civil society in EAM had the highest end-of-project scores of 6.5**. The following figure presents a summary of the collective civil society capacity scores across the three pilot hotspots.

FIGURE 10: COMPARISON OF BASELINE AND FINAL COLLECTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY SCORES ACROSS HOTSPOTS





Similarly, the project design also set targets for the number of CEPF grantees including indigenous organizations and women's groups of at least 10% improvement in CSTT scores. As indicated in Table 10 above, the project partially met the targets for this indicator as only 52 local grantees (42% of the 124 who completed the CSTT) showed improvements of 10% or greater on the CSTT scores compared to their baseline scores which fell short of the target set for the indicator (60 grantees) by 13%. Of the CSOs showing improvements of at least 10%, the majority were located in the Indo-Burma hotspot (27 grantees: 52%), followed by the Cerrado (17 grantees: 33%). Only 08 local grantees from the EAM (15%) showed improvements in the CSTT scores of 10% or greater. Of the 176 civil society organizations awarded grants under this project, a total of 14 organizations (08%) were Indigenous People's organizations. Of these 14 organizations, 11 organizations (79%) showed improvements of 10% or more on the CSTT, thus enabling the project to exceed its target of improving the CSTT scores of 05 Indigenous People's organizations. Overall, interviews and field visits to grantees provided additional confirmation that some civil society groups have successfully managed to build their technical capacities and leverage their experience on the CEPF project to source additional funding from national and international donors to expand their operations, scale up their current projects, and build upon the work undertaken through the CEPF funding.

Lastly, the project tracked and set targets for a number of CEPF grantees that show at least 20% improvements in their GTT scores. Compared to the target of 30 grantees, a total of 57 grantees showed improvements of 20% or greater on the GTT. A hotspot-wise analysis shows that, similar to the case of the CSTT, the largest share of grantees with improvements in GTT scores of 20% or more was seen in the Indo-Burma hotspot (28 grantees: 49%). The Cerrado and EAM had similar number of grantees with improvements of 20% or more in GTT scores at 15 grantees (26%) and 14 grantees (25%), respectively. However, the project target of 05 women's groups showing improvements in CSTT scores of 10% or more was unable to be met despite repeated efforts, as the project was only able to award grants to two women's group over the course of the project's duration.

Based on the findings of the TE, the Team concluded that the RITs were successfully contracted for the duration of the project and were found to have high capacities in terms of grant-making and managing the small grants program which were effectively utilized for project implementation. However, the CEPF's challenges in securing funding for the RIT in EAM could negatively impacted its long-term sustainability by depriving the hotspot of a steward for the implementation of the long-term vision. Moreover, the TE also revealed that the RITs were successful in providing significant support to the grantees throughout the implementation of the project. However, the sheer number of grantees, particularly those with lesser capacities, spread the RITs' resources thin and reduced the efficiency of the project. Lastly, while at the collective level, all hotspots exceeded targets for achieving improvement in civil society capacity and grantees' gender mainstreaming capacities, the project only partially met its targets on the number of local grantees who showed improvements in CSTT scores of 10% or more. Therefore, the following ratings are provided for Outcome 2.1 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.



TABLE 11: OUTCOME 2.1 RATING

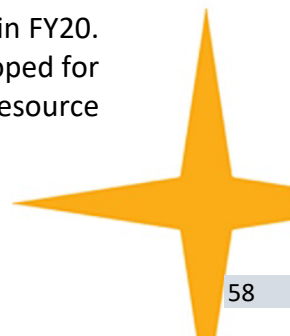
Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Satisfactory

**Outcome 2.2** pertains to **increased and more sustained financial flows to civil societies** engaged in the conservation of biodiversity, and comprises of two outputs: a) development of regional resource mobilization strategies to generate additional revenue in the three pilot hotspots (Output 2.2.1); and b) demonstration of at least 2 innovative models for private sector conservation finance in the pilot hotspots (Output 2.2.2). The following table outlines the Outcome-level indicator associated with the Outcome and reports the progress made by the project towards its actualization.

TABLE 12: PROGRESS ON INDICATORS UNDER OUTCOME 2.2 (AS OF 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

Outcome 2.2: Increased and more sustained financial flows to civil societies engaged in the conservation of biodiversity, from diverse sources, including non-traditional sources				
Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress till TE	Progress Rating
Outcome indicator 2.2.1: Funds available in sustainable financing mechanisms to support priorities in long-term conservation visions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sustainable financing mechanisms from non-traditional sources (e.g. private sector, new economic and financial instruments, etc.)</li> <li>conservation finance generated by innovating private sector models</li> </ul>	USD 8.9 million available in sustainable financing mechanisms in the pilot hotspots	USD 20 million of additional funding in sustainable financing mechanisms, including USD 5 million from non-traditional sources and USD 2 million from private sector models	USD 21.1 million of additional funding in sustainable financing mechanisms, including USD 2.2 million from non-traditional sources and USD 600,000 from private sector models	Partially Met

Under Output 2.2.1, the project developed a regional resource mobilization strategy for each of the three pilot hotspots. The regional resource mobilization strategies for the EAM and Indo-Burma were prepared during FY18, whereas the strategy for the Cerrado was prepared in FY20. An internal evaluation of the effectiveness of the resource mobilization strategies developed for the Indo-Burma and EAM hotspots revealed that while the RITs and CEPF considered the resource



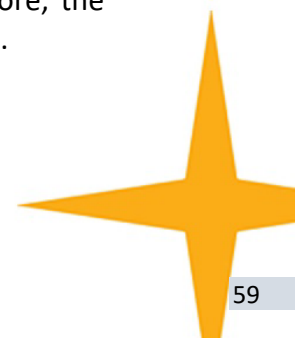
mobilization strategy to be useful for informing internal planning by identifying the funding needed to implement the long-term vision, the frequency of their use and consultation has differed for the two hotspots. In particular, these strategies have been consulted more regularly and used to prepare proposals and guide fundraising activities and enhance discussions with regional donors in the case of the Indo-Burma hotspot. As a result, while the strategy was not directly responsible for raising additional funds for Indo-Burma, it was found to have stimulated financial contributions to the hotspot through the USD 5.5 million raised for the third phase of investment in Indo-Burma from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies which was in alignment with the objectives of the strategy and the donor's objective. However, in the case of the EAM hotspot, the use of the strategy was less frequent and limited to preparation of donor proposals for BirdLife's funding as RIT and not utilized during discussions with donors, and no additional funds were mobilized for future investment in the hotspot by the RIT or the CEPF. Therefore, **while the development of three regional resource mobilization strategies was accomplished under the current outcome, their effectiveness and use has been mixed.**

Output 2.2.2 pertained to the demonstration of at least **two innovative models for private sector conservation finance** in the pilot hotspots. Against this, the project was successful in demonstrating 03 such models, one in each biodiversity hotspot, thereby overachieving on this output. In the Indo-Burma hotspot in FY19, Mars Foods provided a price premium to 200 rice farmers in Cambodia to produce wildlife-friendly rice conforming to the Sustainable Rice Platform standard. While in the EAM, the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (in Kenya) completed the long process of certification and sale of voluntary carbon units on the international market and sold 355,000 units at USD 5.50 per unit. Overall, the total revenue raised through the sale of voluntary carbon units has been USD 2.2 million since 2017. Lastly, in the Cerrado, a grant to develop an incentive mechanism for Brazilian coffee producers to adopt biodiversity-friendly practices leveraged additional funding from Expocaccer, Lavazza, Nescafe and Nespresso, Cooxupe, COFCO International, Volcafe and NKG Stockler, totalling USD 600,000 between 2019 and 2025. There were also in-kind contributions from three municipalities and one private company (DATERRA), valued at USD 325,000 between 2022 and 2025.

As indicated by Table 12 above, the project managed to raise a total of USD 21.1 million in additional funding in sustainable financing mechanisms against the target of USD 20 million. However, the achievement of the sub-indicators for funding from non-traditional sources (USD 2.2 million against a target of USD 5 million) and private sector models (USD 600,000 against a target of USD 2 million) fell short 56% and 70%, respectively, of established targets.

In conclusion, the project achieved results on both outputs associated with this outcome. Although the regional resource mobilization strategies were developed for all three hotspots, their effectiveness and use has been limited. Nevertheless, the project successfully managed to raise the target amount of additional funds in sustainable financing mechanisms on an aggregate level even if it was unable to achieve the disaggregated targets for non-traditional sources and private sector models. Lastly, the project also successfully demonstrated 03 innovative models for private sector conservation finance, overachieving on the targets by 50%. Therefore, the following ratings are provided for Outcome 2.2 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

TABLE 13: OUTCOME 2.2 RATING



Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Satisfactory

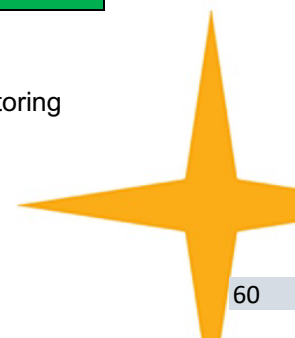
#### 4.4.3 COMPONENT 3 –INNOVATIVE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Component 3 of the project sought to amplify the impacts of the CEPF investments through enhanced and **innovative public and private sector partnerships**. This was envisioned to be undertaken through the grants awarded to civil society that would seek to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes in partnership with public and private sector actors in the three pilot hotspots (Outcome 3.1). In order to achieve this outcome, the project sought to: a) institute at least **6 policies, programs, or plans** that incorporate results of policy demonstration models (Output 3.1.1); b) incorporate at **least 12 biodiversity-friendly management practices** into the business practices of actors in key sectors (Output 3.1.2); and c) introduce **new management models** involving the direct participation of civil society at 20 protected areas (Output 3.1.3). The following table outlines the Outcome-level indicators associated with the Outcome and reports the progress made by the project towards their actualization.

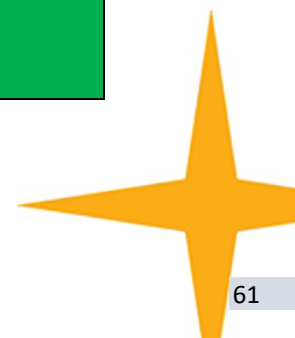
TABLE 14: PROGRESS ON INDICATORS UNDER OUTCOME 3.1 (AS OF 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)

Outcome 3.1: Integrating biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes implemented with public and private sector actors across at least total 1,000,000 hectares in the Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane and Indo-Burma Hotspots				
Outcome Indicators	Baseline <sup>18</sup>	Target	Progress till TE	Progress Rating
Outcome indicator 3.1.1: Number of hectares of production landscapes that demonstrate effective ways of mainstreaming biodiversity	1,862,161 hectares of production landscapes with effective biodiversity mainstreaming	1 million hectares of production landscapes with effective biodiversity mainstreaming	2,221,847 hectares of production landscapes with effective biodiversity mainstreaming	Completed
Outcome indicator 3.1.2: Number of protected areas with new management models featuring direct participation of civil society organizations or indigenous and local communities that show	09 protected areas with new models	20 protected areas with new models	87 protected areas with new models	Completed

<sup>18</sup> The Baselines for these outcome indicators are reported from the updated project results monitoring framework of 30 June 2016.



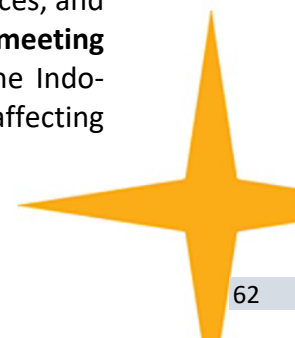
improvements in SP1 METT scores				
Outcome indicator 3.1.3: Number of globally threatened species with reduced threats to their populations through mainstreaming of biodiversity into production landscapes and/or implementation of new protected area models	0 globally threatened species with reduced threats to their populations	20 globally threatened species with reduced threats to their populations	33 globally threatened species with reduced threats to their populations	<b>Completed</b>
Outcome indicator 3.1.4: Number of conservation corridors with enhanced ecological connectivity through the incorporation of financial incentives into policy and the adoption of biodiversity-friendly management practices by private companies	0 conservation corridors with enhanced ecological connectivity	6 conservation corridors with enhanced ecological connectivity	7 conservation corridors with enhanced ecological connectivity	<b>Completed</b>
Outcome indicator 3.1.5: Number of indigenous and local communities that have increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services	22 communities with increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services	250 communities with increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services	443 communities with increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services	<b>Completed</b>
Outcome indicator 3.1.6: Number of women and number of men that receive direct socio-economic benefits through increased income, food security, resource rights or other measures of human wellbeing	11,939 women and 14,844 men with direct socio-economic benefits	25,000 women and 25,000 men with direct socio-economic benefits	77,814 women and 68,271 men with direct socio-economic benefits	<b>Completed</b>
Outcome indicator 3.1.7: Number of women and number of men that receive indirect socio-economic benefits through enhanced and more secure delivery of ecosystem services	32,054 women and 32,504 men with indirect socio-economic benefits	125,000 women and 125,000 men with indirect socio-economic benefits	141,993 women and 132,527 men with indirect socio-economic benefits	<b>Completed</b>



Against a target of 06 policies, programs or plans that incorporate results of policy demonstration models as laid out in Output 3.1.1, **the project was successful in influencing a total of 45 policies** across the three pilot hotspots through 28 grants. Of these 28 grants, 11 were awarded to grantees in the Cerrado (39%), 10 were awarded in Indo-Burma (36%), and 07 in the EAM (25%). Of the total 45 policies, 21 policies were influenced in the Cerrado (47%) comprising 06 at the national and 15 at the sub-national level, which were mostly focused on ecosystem management, agricultural best practices, species conservation, protected area declaration, and climate resilience.

Interviews with the RIT in Cerrado revealed that the activities surrounding policy demonstration models was adversely affected by the political climate in Brazil which hampered the grantees' ability to affect policies at the national level. Instead, the IEB and its grantees implemented a more localized approach targeting policies at the sub-national and provincial level. A total of 21 policies were influenced in the EAM (47%) comprising of 19 policies at the local level in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and 02 national level policies in Uganda. Lastly, only 03 policies were influenced in the Indo-Burma hotspot (07%) which focused on the incorporation of community co-management approaches at a wildlife sanctuary into national zoning guidelines for protected areas in Cambodia. Overall, the TE Team found that **the current project with its focus on small-sized grants to civil society for a relatively short implementation period of 2-3 years was not conducive to influencing policies with broad national-level scope due to resource and time constraints in achieving the level of engagement and relationship building with national institutions. Nevertheless, the project has been successful in influencing policies by shifting focus towards more local and sub-national levels.**

Through Output 3.1.2, the project sought to incorporate at least 12 biodiversity-friendly management practices into the business practices of actors in key sectors. Overall, the project was successful in having an additional **34 biodiversity-friendly business practices adopted by private sector actors** (from a baseline of 07) through 19 grants. Of these 19 grants, 11 were awarded to grantees in the Cerrado (58%), 06 were awarded in Indo-Burma (32%), and 02 were awarded in the EAM (11%). In the Cerrado, 20 companies introduced biodiversity-friendly practices (59%), including 14 in the agriculture sector, two in the tourism sector, one in the strategic consulting sector, and three working on ecological restoration. In the Eastern Afromontane, 12 companies (35%) in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe adopted such practices, including in the brewing, oil and gas, agriculture and forestry sectors. Meanwhile, only 02 business practices were adopted in the Indo-Burma hotspot (06%) in the agriculture and manufacturing industries. Through interviews with various stakeholders, the TE revealed that engagement with the private sector, especially in areas such as the Cerrado hotspot where the CEPF has not been well-established, requires dedicated and sustained long-term efforts to building trust in order to influence business practices. Particularly in the context of the Cerrado hotspot where large agribusinesses dominate, influencing business practices within such key players was found to be challenging and required significantly greater effort, resources, and timeframe to be achieved effectively. Nevertheless, **the project has been successful in meeting its overall targets for biodiversity-mainstreaming in business practices.** However, the Indo-Burma hotspot was found to have achieved significantly lesser impact, both in terms of affecting



public sector policies as well as incorporating biodiversity-friendly business practices in key sectors. This is elaborated further in the Impact section below.

Lastly, through Output 3.1.3, the project sought to introduce new management models involving direct civil society participation at 20 protected areas across the three pilot hotspots. The project was successful in developing new management models for 87 additional protected areas through 33 grants. In the Cerrado, a total of 14 grants (42%) were awarded which introduced new management models in a total of 70 protected areas (80%). In the case of the EAM hotspot, 11 grants (33%) were successful in introducing new management models in 07 protected areas (08%). Whereas, in the Indo-Burma hotspot, a total of 08 grants (24%) were successful in introducing new management models at 10 protected areas (11%).

In conclusion, the project was highly successful in meeting and, in most cases, over-achieving its targets for influencing public sector policies, introducing biodiversity-friendly practices in the private sector, and introducing new management models in protected areas across the biodiversity hotspots. However, the TE team observed that the impact generated from influencing public sector policies and introducing biodiversity-friendly practices was more localized and limited in its scope as the project was constrained in its resources, timeframe, and approach to undertake the necessary engagement and relationship building required to affect policies at a larger scale as well as to influence larger private sector players in the key sectors. Therefore, the following ratings are provided for Outcome 3.1 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

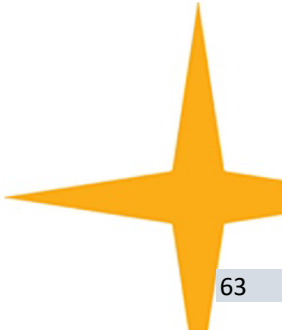
TABLE 15: OUTCOME 3.1 RATING

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Highly Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Outcome Rating	Highly Satisfactory

**4.4.4 COMPONENT 4 – REPLICATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND TOOLS**

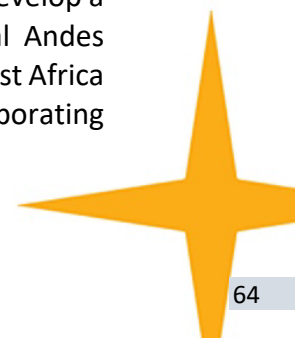
Through its two outcomes, Component 4 set out to replicate successful approaches and tools generated under the project in other hotspots where CEPF is active in (Outcome 4.1) as well as to make the knowledge generated under the current project more widely available to other conservation actors (Outcome 4.2). Outcome 4.1 is composed of four outputs which aim to: a) institute long-term implementation structures incorporating experiences from pilot hotspots in 9 other biodiversity hotspots (Output 4.1.1); b) develop regional resource mobilization strategies based on lessons learned from the current project in 9 other biodiversity hotspots (Output 4.1.2); c) adopt successful policy demonstration models from the pilot hotspots in at least two additional countries in other biodiversity hotspots (4.1.3); and d) replicate management practices for mainstreaming biodiversity in the private sector in at least two countries in other biodiversity hotspots. The following table outlines the Outcome-level indicators associated with the Outcome, and reports the progress made by the project towards their actualization.

TABLE 16: PROGRESS ON INDICATORS UNDER OUTCOME 4.1 (AS OF 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)



Outcome 4.1: CEPF investments in other hotspots strengthened through the adoption of successful models and tools developed in the pilot hotspots				
Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress till TE	Progress Rating
Outcome indicator 4.1.1: Number of additional hotspots that have long-term implementation structures	0 additional hotspots with long-term implementation structures	9 additional hotspots with long-term implementation structures	4 additional hotspots with long-term implementation structures	Not Completed
Outcome indicator 4.1.2: Number of additional hotspots that have regional resource mobilization strategies	0 additional hotspots with regional resource mobilization strategies	9 additional hotspots with regional resource mobilization strategies	1 additional hotspot with regional resource mobilization strategy.	Not Completed
Outcome indicator 4.1.3: Number of successful policy demonstration models that have been adopted in at least one additional hotspot	0 policy demonstration models adopted in at least one additional hotspot	2 policy demonstration models adopted in at least one additional hotspot	2 policy demonstration models adopted in at least one additional hotspot	Completed
Outcome indicator 4.1.4: Number of management best practices that have been adopted in at least one additional hotspot	0 management best practices adopted in at least one additional hotspot	2 management best practices adopted in at least one additional hotspot	2 management best practices adopted in at least one additional hotspot	Completed

A key lesson learned from the previous phases of the CEPF has been the need to strengthen the generation of knowledge and application of lessons learned from CEPF’s operations across its portfolio. As a result, the current project has a strong focus on the generation of knowledge and the replication of successful models from these pilot hotspots into other hotspots where the CEPF operates in. Under this component, the project awarded **multi-hotspot grants** to local international civil society organizations to replicate best practices from the pilot hotspots into other hotspots around the world. Overall, the TE found that **progress against the achievement of Outcome 4.1 has been mixed**. The project made progress towards Output 4.1.1 by instituting new long-term implementation structures in 04 additional hotspots, namely the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot in 2019, the Wallacea Hotspot in 2020, the Caribbean Hotspot in 2021, and the Tropical Andes Hotspot in 2022. However, this fell short of the established target of instituting long-term implementation in 09 additional hotspots. Similarly, the project was able to develop a regional resource mobilization strategy for only one additional hotspot (the Tropical Andes Hotspot) while the regional resource mobilization strategy for the Guinean Forests of West Africa is currently being developed. It is expected though that work on developing and incorporating





regional resource mobilization strategies into future long-term visions will continue, particularly as a result of an internal evaluation of the effectiveness of regional resource mobilization strategies which provided additional recommendations to increase the effectiveness of future strategies.

Overall, the TE found that the project was constrained by challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and the unfavorable global economic climate which resulted in shifts in donor priorities and made leveraging additional financing much more challenging. As a result, the CEPF had to adapt its approach accordingly and shift towards a model of less breadth but greater depth and sustainability by focusing on operating in fewer hotspots than the 12 it had assumed at the time of project design. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that long-term implementation structures will be established for additional hotspots after the end of the project, starting with the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Hotspot in June 2022.

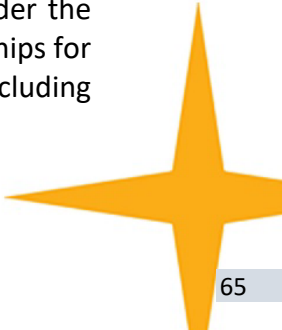
The project was found to be successful at replicating both policy demonstration models (Output 4.1.3) as well as management best practices (Output 4.1.4) generated from the current project in additional hotspots. In particular, two successful policy demonstration models from the Indo-Burma Hotspot, one pertaining to mainstreaming bustard conservation into rice cultivation, and the other to community-managed fish conservation zones, were replicated in the Himalayas Hotspot and the Himalayas and Mesoamerica Hotspots respectively. Similarly, the project also successfully replicated two management best practices from the Indo-Burma Hotspot in to other hotspots. More specifically, best practices for identifying Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) as a tool for safeguarding sites from incompatible development were replicated in the EAM and Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspots. In addition, best practices for mainstreaming biodiversity into the operations of Chinese companies in the Mountains of Southwest China Hotspot.

Overall, the project was found to have achieved its targets for replicating successful policy demonstration models and best management practices from the pilot hotspots to additional hotspots. While the project made progress towards establishing long-term implementation structures and developing regional resource mobilization strategies in other hotspots, it fell short of meeting its established targets, primarily as a result of shifting donor priorities and the global economic downturn brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, based on the assessment of the TE Team, the following ratings are provided for Outcome 4.1 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

TABLE 17: OUTCOME 4.1 RATING

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory
Efficiency	Moderately Satisfactory
<b>Overall Outcome Rating</b>	<b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>

Outcome 4.2 pertained to making the models, tools, and best practices developed under the project widely available to **inform other global actors** developing public-private partnerships for biodiversity conservation through the development of at least **06 knowledge products**, including



at least 01 related to gender mainstreaming and indigenous people and conservation, each (Output 4.2.1). Although the project’s results framework at the time of design stipulated one outcome indicator measuring the adoption of best practices, models and tools in areas outside CEPF investments, it has only reported against this indicator in the final Project Implementation Report. Instead, the project has been reporting on the associated output indicator which set out to measure the number of knowledge products developed under the project and made publicly available. Therefore, the following table has outlined and reported progress made against both the Outcome and Output indicators.

**TABLE 18: PROGRESS ON INDICATORS UNDER OUTCOME 4.2 (AS OF 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022)**

<b>Outcome 4.2: Models, tools and best practices developed under the project are widely available and inform other actors developing public-private partnerships for biodiversity conservation globally</b>				
<b>Output Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Progress till TE</b>	<b>Progress Rating</b>
Outcome Indicator 4.2.1: Number of models, tools and best practices developed under the project that have been adopted by conservation practitioners in areas outside CEPF investments	0 models, tools and/or best practices adopted in areas outside CEPF investments	3 models, tools and/or best practices adopted in areas outside CEPF investment	3 models, tools and/or best practices adopted in areas outside CEPF investment	<b>Completed</b>
Output Indicator 4.2.1: Number of innovative knowledge products, number of knowledge products related to gender mainstreaming and number of knowledge products related to Indigenous People and conservation made publicly available	0 knowledge products	6 knowledge products, including at least 1 related to gender mainstreaming and at least 1 related to Indigenous People and conservation	6 knowledge products were prepared, including 1 related to gender mainstreaming and 1 related to Indigenous People	<b>Completed</b>

Under this outcome, the project successfully developed 06 knowledge products which included: (i) a guide to establishing community-managed fish conservation zones; (ii) a master class for CEPF applicants that provides detailed instruction on project design, M&E, safeguards, procurement and other issues; (iii) a web portal focusing on the conservation of bustards; (iv) a manual providing guidance to replicate strategies for uptake of sustainable practices; (v) a guide and video documenting best practices for identification and mapping of traditional communities and their territories; and (vi) a package of training materials on strengthening women’s voices in conservation. Notably, the project placed special emphasis on including products pertaining to gender mainstreaming and indigenous communities in its portfolio of knowledge products, thereby showcasing a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, all six products



are publicly available on the CEPF’s website and the video materials are available on Youtube. The TE Team also found that five of the six knowledge products were produced in multiple languages including English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, which bolsters their accessibility and promotes wider dissemination among the non-Anglosphere.

In addition, three of the models, tools or best practices developed under the project were adopted by conservation practitioners in areas outside the biodiversity hotspots where the CEPF is currently active. The models for mainstreaming bustard conservation into rice cultivation and for community-managed fish conservation zones were both adopted in the Himalayas Hotspot in India, where the CEPF has not invested since 2010. In addition, the community-managed fish conservation zones were also adopted in the Mesoamerica Hotspot in Costa Rica, where the CEPF has not invested since 2011. Lastly, the best practice for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the operations of Chinese companies was adopted in the Mountains of Southwest China Hotspot, where the CEPF has not invested since 2013.

Therefore, based on the assessment of the TE Team, the following ratings are provided for Outcome 4.2 in accordance with the CI-GEF TE criteria.

**TABLE 19: OUTCOME 4.2 RATING**

Criteria	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
<b>Overall Outcome Rating</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

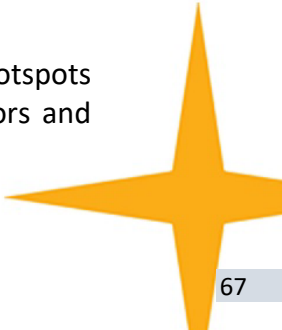
**4.5 SUSTAINABILITY**

The following subsections examine the overall risks to sustainability of the project in terms of financial, institutional framework and governance, socio-economic, and environmental factors. The overall sustainability of the project outcomes are also rated on a four-point scale based on an assessment of the likelihood and magnitude of the risks to sustainability based on the results of the project.

**4.5.1 FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS**

Ensuring that project level results are sustained after GEF funding ceases depends largely on the institutional stakeholders’ capacities. The entire project is premised on strengthening the long-term sustainability of biodiversity conservation actors in the three pilot hotspots and bolstering institutional capacities of key stakeholders is a prominent component of the project’s design and implementation. Through the establishment of long-term implementation structures, the project sought to form institutions that would lead the implementation of CEPF’s long-term visions in each hotspot beyond the current project. In addition to establishing these structures, the CEPF also provided technical assistance to these institutions to strengthen their capacities in grant-making, portfolio management, and implementation of safeguards.

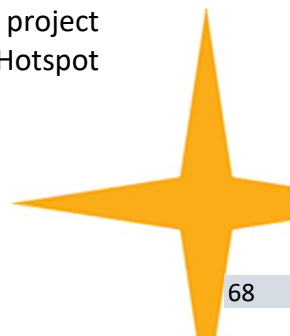
The project also aimed to develop the capacities of local civil society in each of the three hotspots to better position them to source funding from other national and international donors and



reduce their reliance on the CEPF. The RITs in each of the hotspots provided significant technical assistance to the grantees in various areas of the project cycle, from trainings on proposal development and project design to effectively incorporating and implementing project safeguards to monitoring and reporting. As a result, the project showed that collective civil society capacities increase in all three of the hotspots, albeit with differences in degrees between them.

Interviewed project grantees revealed that the support they received from the project facilitated them to improve their project management practices, better incorporate financial accountability mechanisms and safeguards into their projects, and improve their proposal development and project design skills. Grantees also revealed increased confidence in their ability to develop and manage bigger projects and source funding from additional donors. In fact, the TE Team found that some grantees in all three hotspots were able to secure additional funding from other national and international donors which resulted in up-scaling their operations and building on the results of their CEPF-funded project. However, as noted earlier, there was variation in the degree to which civil society capacity increased across the three hotspots. Based on an analysis of the collective civil society assessments, collective civil society capacity showed the greatest improvement in the Cerrado hotspot, while the Indo-Burma hotspot showed more modest improvements in overall civil society capacities. Consequently, interviews with various project stakeholders and grantees confirmed that several civil society groups have successfully managed to build their technical capacities and leverage their experience on the CEPF project to source additional funding from national and international donors to expand their operations, scale up their current projects, and build upon the work undertaken through the CEPF funding which was attributed to the increased organizational, management, and technical capacity gained from the targeted trainings as well as the implementation of the CEPF grant.

The project has only reported the institution of 01 long-term implementation structure as of the project's conclusion. However, there is a high likelihood that in addition to the Indo-Burma Hotspot for which the project was successful in securing additional funding for continued operations, the RIT for the Cerrado hotspot (IEB) will receive an additional USD 1.8 million through the GEF-7 STAR allocation for which the IEB has received a USD 50,000 project preparation grant for the elaboration of its full proposal. In addition, the TE Team found that the institution of long-term implementation structures into other hotspots by CEPF has continued even after the current project's conclusion, although at a reduced pace. However, to a certain extent the continuation of the establishment of these long-term implementation structures, in line with the CEPF Phase III Strategic Framework, is contingent on factors beyond the project's control such as the global economic climate and priorities of donors. It is likely that the project was able to secure funding for the Indo-Burma hotspot, as the world's most threatened biodiversity hotspots that has lost 95% of its natural habitat and the most populated Hotspot in, due to it being a key priority for a majority of donors working towards biodiversity conservation. While donors interviewed as part of the TE expressed great appreciation for the work undertaken by the CEPF through its approach of directly funding local civil society organizations in hotspots, indicating a strong inclination to continue supporting the CEPF in its future endeavor, the project has had limited success in translating donor interest into continued funding for the EAM Hotspot



which has ceased CEPF's engagement in that hotspot. Therefore, the project's sustainability in terms of financial and institutional factors was found to be ***Moderately Likely***.

#### 4.5.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

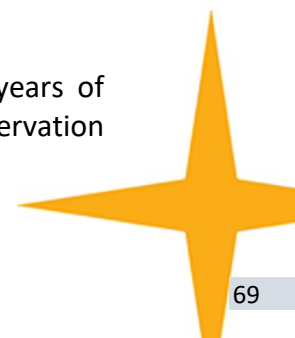
The project worked directly with civil society organizations across 18 countries in three continents that were provided small and large grants to implement their proposed projects. Due to the sheer diversity of the regions where the project was implemented, the socio-economic factors affecting sustainability are varied as well. Political stability and conflict was one of the factors affecting sustainability that came into play over the course of the project's implementation. For instance, in the EAM Hotspot, although the project was able to award a few grants to civil society operating in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Yemen, one of the factors that resulted in a switch in the project's approach to focus mostly on four countries (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) within the EAM hotspot was the rise in the political instability and conflict in some of these countries which prevented the project from effectively operating in those regions. Similarly, in the Cerrado hotspot, unfavorable political environment created significant challenges for the effective operation of local civil society organizations, particularly in terms of engagement with the public sector. However, in both instances, the project was able to adapt. In the first case, the project shifted focus to countries with significantly lower risk of political instability and conflict in order to be more effective. In the latter case, the project shifted its approach in terms of engagement with the public sector by increasing engagement with key public sector actors at the local and sub-national level. Thus, the project was able to lower risks to sustainability created by socio-economic and political factors in an effort to bolster the longevity of the achieved results beyond the project duration. Therefore, the project's sustainability in terms of socio-economic and political factors was found to be ***Likely***.

#### 4.5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The project's grantees implemented a variety of biodiversity conservation projects to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, addressing issues surrounding habitat loss, fragmentation, species conservation, and over-exploitation of natural resources, among others. The effects of climate change and variability are projected to compound pressures on the natural ecosystems of the three hotspots in which the project operated in. In order to address the issue, the project provided guidance to its grantees on incorporating, wherever possible and appropriate, climate change adaptation strategies that enhance resilience of natural systems. Additional measures incorporated by the project included enhancing ecological connectivity within conservation corridors as well as using a cluster approach in awarding grants to organizations working in particular sectors or regions to enhance synergies and increase impact. Overall, the TE Team found that the risks posed by climate change and other environmental factors was low and expected to be gradual over time. Therefore, the project's sustainability in terms of environmental factors was found to be ***Likely***.

### 4.6 PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

The project was designed to have a transformational impact, building on over 13 years of experience in the CEPF's unique niche of empowering local actors to address global conservation



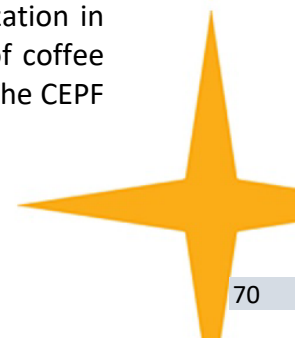
priorities. Through small and large grants to civil society organizations, impact was achieved at two levels: a) strengthened institutional capacities; and b) achievement and replication of successful policy demonstrations and incorporation of biodiversity mainstreaming in business practices of key private sector actors across the three hotspots.

In terms of **institutional capacity building**, the project was found to have increased the capacities of the RITs as well as its grantees through the provision of targeted trainings on portfolio management, grant management systems, and implementation of safeguards to the former; and project design, proposal development, financial management, environmental and social safeguards, monitoring and reporting to the latter. As a result, collective civil society capacity in all three hotspots improved as measured by the Collective Civil Society Assessments, with an increase in scores of 67% in the Cerrado, 33% in the Indo-Burma, and 24% in the EAM Hotspots. However, at the grantee-level, only 52 local grantees (42% of those who completed the CSTT) showed improvements of 10% or greater on the CSTT scores, with improvements in organizational capacity uneven across the hotspots. The majority of grantees who improved on their CSTT scores were based in the Indo-Burma Hotspot (27 grantees; 52%) followed by the Cerrado (17 grantees; 33%). While only 08 local grantees from the EAM (15%) showed improvements in CSTT scores of 10% or greater.

**Across all three hotspots, interviews with grantees revealed improved organizational and management capacities.** For instance, in the Cerrado, local organizations such as FUNDACCER reported that implementation of the CEPF grant improved their capacity to build and manage institutional relationships with partner organizations and increase trust with farmer communities. Similarly, CooperAgroFamiliar, another local organization in Brazil, reported that the main benefit for the organization was the improvement of its management practices, which raised their confidence in their ability to design and implement more complex and bigger projects with international donor funding. In the case of a grantee in Indo-Burma, the Trans Boundary Journalist and Communicators' Association working on increasing awareness of trans-boundary impacts of development projects in the Indo-Burma, was successfully able to register itself as an association due to technical assistance and capacity building it received through the project.

In the case of EAM, the RIT (BirdLife) provided targeted trainings to shortlisted applicants on various aspects of the project cycle including grant proposal development, project design, monitoring and reporting, financial management, and incorporation of environmental and social safeguards. As a result, grantees such as East African Wildlife Society (based in Kenya) reported that these trainings were particularly impactful for their organization as their capacity to effectively develop proposals, design projects, monitor activities, and implement environmental and social safeguards improved. In addition, the East African Wildlife Society also received assistance through training on the development of stakeholder engagement plan and on project management, which enabled the formation of a strong project management team with clearly defined roles.

For some organizations, the CEPF grants were an opportunity to pivot towards more intensive and diverse biodiversity conservation work. For instance, FUNDACCER, a local organization in Brazil, primarily works to promote origin certification and geographic denomination of coffee produced in the Cerrado region and promote quality improvement for coffee farmers. The CEPF



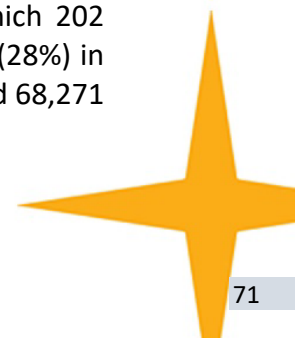
provided FUNDACCER an opportunity to work on forest restoration to increase water volume and improve water quality of the Feio River Basin, an important source of water for farmers as well as the city of Patrocinio. Similarly, the Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association, which worked on strengthening the capacity of the Rugezi Marsh rangers to increase protection of the Marsh was mostly focused on mountain guerrilla and bamboo tree species conservation. In the Indo-Burma Hotspot, Sansom Mlup Prey amplified its efforts in sustainable livelihoods by successfully increasing the uptake of organic certification among rice farmers which resulted in generating successful market linkages through which farmers were able to sell their crops at a premium.

**The CEPF funding also acted as a catalyst for organizations to secure additional funding from other sources.** For instance, the Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Uganda was able to develop linkages with other organizations and receive additional financial support in order to bolster the sustainability of its project which was supporting indigenous communities in Uganda through capacity building in the management of the Bwindi National Park. Similarly, the Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association also reported that they were able to secure co-funding from additional donors such as National Geographic and IUCN to continue to build on the work undertaken through the CEPF grant and enable the long-term sustainability of the project. In the Indo-Burma Hotspot, Sansom Mlup Prey, operating in Cambodia, was successful in receiving funding from Oxfam on a project promoting the integration of women's economic empowerment in livelihoods programs.

**The project also achieved high-level environmental impact through its grantees' projects.** Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity were strengthened in an additional 2,221,847 hectares of production landscapes (comprising agricultural land, grazing land, community fisheries, community forests, and limestone quarries), with 1,294,358 hectares in the Cerrado, 851,794 hectares in the EAM, and 75,694 hectares in Indo-Burma. New management models featuring direct participation of civil society (including co-managed protected areas, community protected areas, multiple-use conservation landscapes, and fishery conservation zones) were introduced to an additional 2,848,116 hectares of protected areas (1,848,911 hectares in the Cerrado, 752,987 hectares in the EAM, and 246,218 hectares in Indo-Burma). Ecological connectivity was enhanced in six conservation corridors, totaling 6,668,562 hectares (3,440,628 hectares in the Cerrado; 1,473,234 hectares in the Eastern Afromontane; and 1,754,700 in Indo-Burma).

The grants developed new management models featuring direct participation of civil society organization and/or indigenous and local communities in a total of 87 protected areas, 70 (80%) of whom were in the Cerrado, 09 (10%) were in the Indo-Burma hotspot, and 08 (09%) in the EAM. The project also tracked the number of globally threatened species with reduced threats to their population through mainstreaming of biodiversity into production landscapes and/or implementation of new protected areas and was **successful in reducing threats to 33 globally threatened species.**

At the community-level, the grants were successful in providing **443 indigenous and local communities with increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services**, of which 202 communities (46%) were in the Cerrado, 117 communities (26%) in the EAM, and 124 (28%) in the Indo-Burma hotspots. Moreover, these grants provided a total of 77,814 women and 68,271

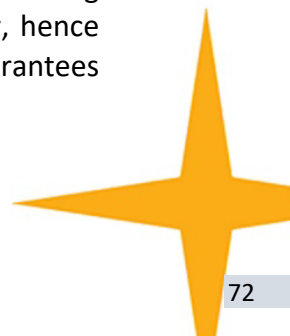


men with direct socio-economic benefits, and 141,993 women and 132,527 men with indirect socio-economic benefits. Overall, these results indicate that grantees in the EAM hotspot worked with local communities the most as 40 of the total 87 grants (46%) were provided to grantees in the EAM hotspot. Consequently, they were successfully able to provide **direct benefits** to a total of 68,161 women (86% of total women) and 58,816 men (86% of total men); and **indirect benefits** to a total of 67,202 women (47% of total women) and 57,384 men (43% of total men). In terms of providing direct socio-economic benefits to men and women, the Cerrado had a significantly lower impact with direct socio-economic benefits to only 1,492 women (02% of total women directly benefitted) and 1,727 men (02% of total men directly benefitted). Whereas, the Indo-Burma Hotspot had relatively lower impact with indirect socio-economic benefits to 31,201 women (22% of total women indirectly benefitted) and 31,030 men (23% of total men indirectly benefitted).

In conclusion, the project revealed significant impact at the institutional level, species conservation level, production landscapes level, and the community level. At the institutional level, the project was successful in increasing capacities of the RITs and civil society across the three hotspots. The project also achieved impact in terms of high-level biodiversity conservation by reducing the threats to threatened species, increasing the number of land under effective biodiversity mainstreaming, and introducing new management models in protected areas across the pilot hotspots. At the community level, the project also directly and indirectly benefitted men and women in local and indigenous communities by providing increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services. However, the results have been varied across the hotspots. For instance, grants in the Cerrado hotspot were successful in providing the highest number of local and indigenous communities (202 communities; 46%) with increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services; but grantees in the EAM hotspot provided the highest number and proportion of men and women with **direct and indirect** socio-economic benefits. A possible explanation for this could be different approaches used in overall portfolio management in each of the three hotspots as well as the contextual differences in socio-economic, geographic, political, and administrative aspects. Therefore, the TE revealed the need for a systematic impact assessment across the project's portfolio to examine the differences in the approaches used in developing portfolio of projects across the three hotspots to uncover learnings on effective context-specific strategies and approaches.

## 4.7 SAFEGUARDS

Safeguards are an integral component of all projects implemented by the CI-GEF Agency. Safeguards feature prominently in the current project particularly since the project's grantees implement their projects in a wide range of contexts which necessitate the institution of environmental and social safeguards to ensure that the principle of 'do no harm' is upheld at all times during project implementation. For instance, as many grantees were expected to work in protected areas to introduce new management models involving participation of civil society organizations and local communities, such implementation work can often involve strengthening restrictions on access to natural resources to curb activities that threaten biodiversity, hence instigating the need for involuntary resettlement safeguards. Similarly, the project's grantees





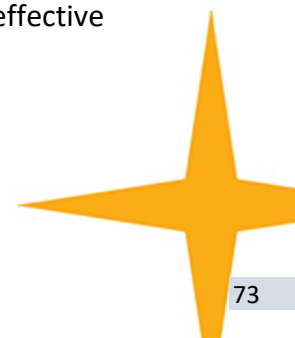
were also expected to work in and with indigenous communities, which requires a special set of safeguards to be implemented.

Overall, the TE Team found that the CEPF was well-positioned as the Executing Agency to ensure the successful implementation of the environment and social safeguards, particularly because of being established through a partnership with the World Bank, GEF, and Conservation International, thereby having sufficient experience in this area. Furthermore, since the CI-GEF Agency's environment and social safeguards are based upon those of the World Bank's, there was prior alignment in the type and scope of the safeguards used by CEPF. As a result, the CEPF was found to demonstrate significant understanding and capacity to be independent in their rollout of the safeguards due to their extensive prior experience as a grant-making institution.

The RITs functioned as executing partners to the CEPF and were responsible for awarding and managing the small grants component of the project. Despite all three RITs having prior experience in grant-making in their respective hotspots, the TE found that the rigor of the CI-GEF safeguards necessitated the provision of trainings to the RITs to improve their capacity to ensure that they could effectively screen grant applications on the extent to which safeguards were incorporated into project design as well as support their grantees in the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of safeguards throughout their project duration.

The project grantees were the ultimate implementers of the safeguards in their individual projects. The project worked with a diverse range of civil society organizations which varied considerably in size, geographic scope, and capacity and included small and large local and international NGOs, academic institutions, indigenous groups, and women's groups. Collectively, 44% of the grants awarded under the project were classified as small grants which were provided mostly to local civil society organizations. As elaborated in previous sections, the RITs provided significant technical assistance and trainings to project grantees on incorporating and implementing safeguards in their projects, particularly to small local organizations who lacked the knowledge, skills and organizational capacity to effectively implement the safeguards in the absence of such trainings.

Overall, the TE found that the reception of the safeguards among small local organizations was mixed. In most instances, these grantees expressed confusion regarding the purpose of the safeguards, which was compounded by their lack of familiarity with CI-GEF's processes. The trainings provided by the RITs were also geared towards addressing resistance and filling gaps in knowledge and understanding regarding the purpose of the safeguards and the benefits of incorporating and implementing safeguards. Generally, the RITs' approach in meeting such challenges involved inculcating greater appreciation for the safeguards by challenging grantees' assumptions regarding the applicability of safeguards in their projects and building a case for why and how the safeguards could improve project results and amplify their effectiveness, impact, and long-term sustainability. Moreover, grantees were also made aware of the fact that an increasing number of donors require the presence of effective safeguard mechanisms within a given project, and that the CEPF funding provides grantees the opportunity to not just bolster their understanding and knowledge of safeguard systems but to demonstrate their effective implementation, which furthers their ability to secure future funding from donors.



This effort was found to be effective to some extent. In fact, during interviews, some grantees identified difficulties in incorporating environmental and social safeguards into their projects as a key challenge faced by civil society operating in their hotspots, which they have been able to improve upon as a result of the CEPF grant. This was reported by all three grantees in the EAM Hotspot who were interviewed as part of the evaluation, indicating that the issues of safeguards is gaining acceptance amongst local civil society organizations. Nevertheless, in the case of Cerrado, local civil society organizations expressed significant challenges with the accountability and safeguard mechanisms due to their complexity and demanding nature.

Having said that, the TE did also find some evidence that compared to some other donors such as the Brazil Biodiversity Fund FUNBIO in Brazil, a key source of grants for local organizations based in Brazil, the CI-GEF safeguard mechanisms were relatively less complex. However, the RITs also highlighted the need to simplify and streamline safeguards in the context of administering small grant amounts to smaller organizations, often lacking the necessary organizational capacity and infrastructure, for projects with shorter durations and making them fit for purpose. As a result, the TE revealed a need for conducting a review of the safeguard mechanisms in this context so that they are easier to understand and implement for such projects, particularly since these safeguards originated in the context of larger and longer projects with multitudes of greater funding than the grant amounts awarded under this project which ranged from USD 1,626 to USD 400,068.

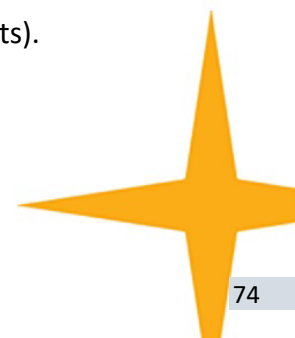
The CEPF project triggered five major safeguard policies, namely the: a) Gender Mainstreaming, b) Stakeholder Engagement; c) Involuntary Resettlement, d) Physical Cultural Resources; and e) Indigenous Peoples. The following sub-sections review the safeguard plans and documentation and analyze the effectiveness of implementing management measures related to the safeguards.

#### **4.7.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING PLAN**

The CEPF did not have a Gender Mainstreaming Policy at the beginning of the PPG phase. Therefore, as per the recommendations of the Environmental and Social Safeguard Screening for the project, the CEPF team described in the PPG Workplan the measures to be put in place to meet the CI-GEF Project Agency's policy on Gender Mainstreaming. This included the development of a gender mainstreaming plan for the project, in consultation with CI's gender specialist, and integration of explicit indicators related to gender mainstreaming into the project's monitoring and evaluation plan.

The GMP contains a Gender Action Plan (GAP) to serve as the basis for addressing gender considerations throughout project implementation and specifically incorporating gender dimensions across the project activities. To ensure consistency of all project activities with CEPF's Gender Policy, the Plan is divided into three parts:

- i. Preparation of the organizational structure and necessary tools.
- ii. Implementation throughout the GEF-project.
- iii. Monitoring & Evaluation and dissemination of lessons learned (especially relevant to Component 4, which concerns replicating successful approaches to other hotspots).



The GMP identifies specific actions for project implementation, noting that the CEPF grantees will have different capacities, needs, and experiences in integrating gender into their business investments and operational structures. Moreover, in view of the gender disparities among the three hotspots, the Plan provides variations that entail a site-specific approach to gender mainstreaming. The Regional Implementation Teams for each hotspot were introduced to the CEPF Gender Policy in order to enable them to work with grantees to systematically mainstream gender into the design of their projects.

The GMP also provides social development and gender indicators against the planned actions for monitoring progress towards gender mainstreaming objectives. More specifically, the GMP lays out specific targets for inclusion of women at the outcome level.

In addition, the Gender Mainstreaming Plan lists three specific gender indicators, measuring;

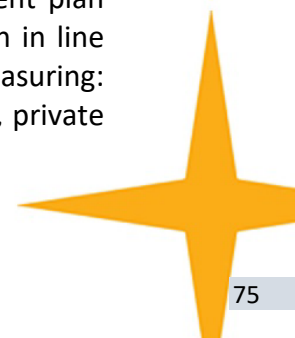
- A. Number of men and women that participated in project activities (e.g. meetings, workshops, consultations);
- B. Number of men and women that received benefits (e.g. employment, income generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles) from the project; and
- C. Number of strategies, plans (e.g. management plans and land use plans), and policies derived from the project that include gender considerations (this indicator applies to relevant projects).

Overall, under CEPF, women's participation has come through in terms of number of women that received benefits (e.g. employment, income-generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles) from the project. Of the people receiving direct economic benefits by the end of the project, 53% were reported to be women. Further, although no targets for the number of men and women participating in project activities were set in the Project Document, by the end of FY22, 27,725 participants had attended trainings, 44% of which were women. Of these women, approximately 43% were in Cerrado, 14% were in the Eastern Afromontane, and 42% were in Indo-Burma. At the policy level, the project also met its target of incorporating gender considerations into the three long-term visions.

Hence, the Evaluation Team found the Gender Mainstreaming Plan for the project to be **Satisfactory**. However, not all GMP targets are carried over into the project results framework as gender disaggregation is missing from most activity-level targets. In particular, activity-level gender targets are provided only for grant awards that aim to strengthen the organizational and technical capacity of civil society organizations in pilot hotspots as well as provision of direct and indirect socio-economic benefits to women and men. Therefore, the project is only reporting on the GAP indicators in aggregate on a yearly basis. As a result, it is difficult to gauge the percentage of women participation per activity at the outcome and output levels.

#### 4.7.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The project document provides a detailed and comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan which formulates the project's approach to stakeholder involvement and participation in line with CI and GEF requirements. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan lists four indicators measuring: a) the number of stakeholder groups (government agencies, civil society organizations, private



sector, indigenous peoples and other stakeholder groups that have been involved in the project implementation phase; b) the number of persons (sex disaggregated) involved in the project; c) number of engagements held with stakeholders; and d) the percentage of stakeholders who rate as satisfactory the level at which their views and concerns are taken into account. These indicators are reported on an annual basis.

During the project implementation, CEPF, RITs, and grantees sought to ensure that men, women, youth and other groups are engaged and build monitoring systems that include necessary disaggregation to track this throughout the life of the project. The most important mechanism that CEPF has put in place to ensure systematic and locally appropriate consultation with and participation of local communities in project activities is its set of social and environmental safeguard policies.

It was reported that there were at least 11 major engagements with stakeholders distributed across the three hotspots. These included country level workshops during mid-term assessment, regional meetings of grantees, and final assessment workshops for the investment phase.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic limited the project team's ability to travel and participate in relevant events or engage key national and international stakeholders. To overcome this hurdle, the team resorted to virtual contacts and communication. In general, the evaluation team received positive feedback about the project's stakeholder engagement efforts and activities.

Moreover, the project benefitted 176 CSOs (147 local and 29 international) in the pilot hotspots which received grants under the project. The number of women and men receiving training is thus used as a proxy for the number of persons involved in the implementation phase. Over the duration of the project, 12,111 women and 15,614 men were thus involved in the project. However, as noted in the Progress towards Result section, stakeholder engagement was found to be limited in some instances, particularly in the development of the long-term visions for the EAM and Indo-Burma which reduced their relevance for donor organizations which may have contributed to lower endorsements for the long-term visions for those hotspots.

In summary, the project's stakeholder engagement plan was found to be **Satisfactory**, as the project has held a number of engagements with its grantees as well as facilitated in the knowledge exchange and learnings as elaborated in the Stakeholder Engagement section. Moreover, given that no targets were established in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan for any of its indicators, the TE Team has made its assessment of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in light of the significant engagement undertaken throughout implementation through the provision of grants to civil society organizations, organization of various workshops for disseminating lessons and knowledge sharing, and through the provision of trainings to personnel of civil society organizations. Conversely, the project was found to have conducted limited donor engagement during the long-term vision exercises in the EAM and Indo-Burma hotspots, which was attributed as a likely reason for their limited endorsement from other regional and global donor organizations.

### 4.7.3 ACCOUNTABILITY AND GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

CEPF does not have a separate policy on accountability and grievance systems, because Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms (AGM) are already incorporated into CEPF's ESMF



with the intention to supplement the proactive stakeholder engagement required throughout the duration of the project.

The CEPF AGM includes the following key provisions: (i) local communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the grantee, the CEPF Secretariat or the WB; (ii) grievances should be made to the grantee, who should respond in writing within 15 days; and (iii) projects that trigger the involuntary resettlement or Indigenous Peoples policy must include a locally appropriate grievance redress mechanism in the relevant safeguard documents.

Accordingly, the CEPF requires its grantees to have a policy and procedure in place to report any conflicts to within a timely fashion. All grantees working with local stakeholders and expected to trigger the Indigenous Peoples policy were required to establish and disclose a locally appropriate grievance redress mechanism which, at minimum, involved participating Indigenous People being provided with a summary of the project aims and activities in local language, together with contact details of the grantee and the RIT, to whom any concerns can be raised confidentially.

One difference from the accountability and grievance systems policy of the CI-GEF Project Agency is that CEPF's ESMF does not require it to communicate grievances to CI or the GEF. However, the ProDoc entails that any grievances related to the project raised by affected communities or other interested stakeholders will be communicated to the CI-GEF Project Agency within 15 days of receipt by the CEPF Secretariat.

The grantees acted as the first point of contact for the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism, and were responsible for informing the concerned communities about the CEPF project activities expected to impact them and ESMF provisions while CEPF and the RITs monitored the grievance mechanisms of individual grants and the grievance email account at CEPF. Monitoring missions undertaken by the CEPF and the RITs also paid attention to whether the local communities and beneficiaries of the grantees were well aware of the Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms instituted in accordance with CI-GEF policies. The RITs placed emphasis on ensuring that materials related to safeguards including the AGM were made available in local languages and were prominently displayed in central locations in the form of posters and flyers.

As outlined in the Project Monitoring Plan, the Fund reported annually on the:

- Number of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism; and
- Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been addressed.

As noted in the Project Implementation Report FY22, each of the grantees remained in compliance with the CEPF's ESG guidance; however, a single grievance was received during FY19, by a grantee in the Cerrado. The grievance was successfully resolved by the grantee and reported to the CI-GEF Project Agency in the Q3 FY19 quarterly report. No other grievances were received over the course of the project. Also, the evaluation team determined that during project RIT's monitoring visits to the communities where projects were implemented, generally, the complaints would come from non-beneficiaries of the projects as they felt excluded.



In summary, the project instituted an AGM where the grantee was the first point of contact with the RIT and CEPF responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the AGM and resolving any grievances that were not resolved at the grantee level. In view of the assigned indicators, the TE Team rated the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism as **Satisfactory**. However, the TE noted that the indicators associated with the AGM do not measure the extent to which information on the project's AGM was disseminated by the grantees to the beneficiaries and local communities engaged over the course of implementation.

#### 4.7.4 INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT (RESTRICTION OF ACCESS)

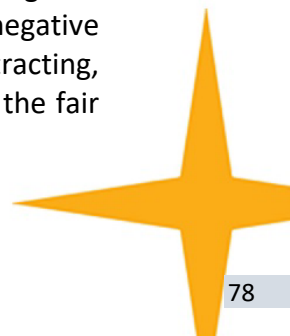
Although involuntary or voluntary resettlement is not planned under the CEPF project, a Process Framework for Restrictions to Access to Natural Resources as a component of the Involuntary Resettlement safeguard was triggered because the project proposed the restriction of access and/or use of natural resources owing to the development and implementation of various policy demonstration models through grants to civil society organizations in the three biodiversity hotspots.

The demonstration models developed under the project were supported by grants to civil society organizations under Component 4. All grants were therefore thoroughly screened to assess whether they trigger Involuntary Resettlement as part of the detailed technical reviews. Accordingly, any grant expected to introduce or strengthen restrictions on access to natural resources within legally designated protected areas was required to prepare a Process Framework on Involuntary Restrictions, prior to contracting, and to integrate appropriate measures into design of the project. The Process Framework were to be laid out to support more sustainable livelihood options for targeted households in order to minimize, mitigate, and/or compensate the potential adverse socioeconomic and cultural impacts of restrictions of access to natural resources that the adoption and implementation of the demonstration models might create. The measures encapsulating the framework included a defined process for negotiating and securing support for restrictions on access with local communities, criteria for identifying affected persons who qualify for compensation, and establishment of a grievance mechanism.

By the end of the project, a total of 35 grants, including five of the 64 grants in the Cerrado (08%), 11 of the 68 grants in the Eastern Afromontane (16%), 17 of the 81 grants in Indo-Burma (21%), and two of the seven multi-hotspot grants (29%) triggered the involuntary resettlement policy. However, none of them reported any involuntary restrictions on access to natural resources. Consequently, while no grants supported the resettlement of people (either voluntary or involuntary), the project followed its established processes. As a result, the Evaluation Team rated the quality and implementation of the Process Framework for Restrictions to Access to Natural Resources as **Satisfactory**.

#### 4.7.5 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

It was anticipated that the project's grantees would work with local Indigenous Peoples or in areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples which would trigger the Indigenous Peoples Safeguard mechanism. To comply with the safeguard, any grant expected to have positive or negative impact on Indigenous Peoples was required to prepare a Social Assessment, prior to contracting, and to integrate appropriate measures into the overall design of the project to ensure the fair



participation of Indigenous People in the project design and implementation. These measures were based on instituting a defined process for securing Free, Prior and Informed Consent from Indigenous People prior to the initiation of project activities, by introducing the project aims and activities to all sections of the community in local languages and requesting their consent to participate in the project. Consent could be obtained in different forms such as verbal or written according to local norms and the grantee was required to document it.

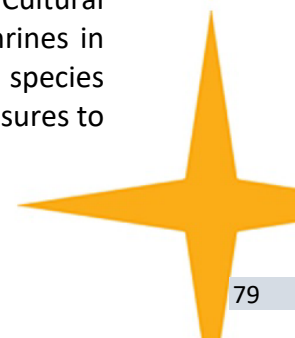
In addition, grantees were also required to establish a criteria for identifying affected persons who qualify for compensation in the case any persons were found to be negatively impacted and identifying the form in which compensation would be made, such as provision of alternative livelihoods, access to savings and microcredit schemes, or compensation payments. Compensation measures were required to be culturally appropriate, negotiated with the concerned persons and not imposed on them. Lastly, grantees were also required to establish a grievance mechanism that involved all participating Indigenous People to be provided with a summary of project aims and activities in local language, along with contact details of the project team and the Regional Implementation Team to whom concerns could be raised confidentially.

A review of the project's annual project implementation reports revealed that a total of 53 grants, including 17 of the 64 grants in the Cerrado (26%), 06 of the 68 grants in the Eastern Afromontane (09%), 28 of the 81 grants in Indo-Burma (35%), and two of the seven multi-hotspot grants (29%) triggered the Indigenous Peoples policy. In all of the 53 cases, grantees prepared Social Assessments and followed a process of obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent with the affected communities. Some grants were also found to have benefitted the communities, with one grant in Indo-Burma developing benefit-sharing mechanisms for Indigenous communities due to which three communities in China gained access to sustainably harvested medicinal plant resources. Therefore, based on the available documentation, the TE Team rated the quality and implementation of the Indigenous Peoples policy as **Satisfactory**.

#### 4.7.6 PHYSICAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

While the project did not plan to remove, alter or disturb any physical cultural resources, a Physical Cultural Resources (PCRs) policy was put in place as the project's grantees could work in areas where PCRs could be found such as natural sites of cultural significance to local communities such as sacred groves, spirit forests and other similar areas. Prior to being contracted, grantees working in areas containing PCRs were required to prepare a document identifying all PCRs in the project area and outlining measures put in place to ensure that adverse effects are avoided and ensuring that the appropriate measures were integrated into the project document including regular monitoring of impacts and reporting to the CEPF Secretariat in the form of a semi-annual safeguard monitoring report. The policy also requires that CEPF and/or the RITs make periodic site visits to the grant to verify information in the safeguard document and reports and ensure that consultations with the concerned communities were implemented correctly.

A review of the project documents revealed that only one grant triggered the Physical Cultural Resources policy in Myanmar (Indo-Burma). The resource concerned was Buddhist shrines in caves in Myanmar where the grant aimed to reduce impacts of tourism on unique species adapted to darkness. The grantee prepared a Physical Resources Plan which set out measures to



avoid any alteration of cultural features in the cave as well as any restrictions on access to the cultural sites for pilgrims. These measures included the use of smart lighting instead of physical barriers to guide tourists and pilgrims in the cave, as well as consultations with monks at local monasteries. Accordingly, the TE Team rated the quality and implementation of the PCR policy as **Satisfactory**. Nevertheless, an independent verification by the CEPF or the RIT could not be conducted as a planned site visit was cancelled due to travel restriction related to the COVID-19 pandemic.





## 4.8 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

As stipulated in the CI-GEF TE criteria, the evaluators are also expected to provide an assessment of whether the Knowledge Management Plan as included in the Project Document was implemented. However, a review of the Project Document revealed that no associated Knowledge Management Plans were developed and included at the design stage of the project. However, as elaborated in the Project Justification section, an entire component of the current project was dedicated to the development and dissemination of knowledge products and lessons learned, as well as the replication of successful models and tools demonstrated under the current project to other hotspots where the CEPF invests in and/or where other actors are working to implement public-private partnerships for biodiversity conservation. To that end, the project demonstrated the timely and successful development and dissemination of six knowledge products throughout the duration of the project. These knowledge products sought to document lessons learned and successful models, best practices, and tools developed and demonstrated through the project's implementation.

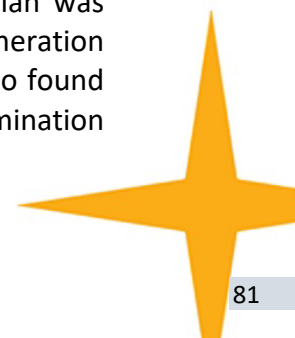
The project was found to have successfully developed 06 knowledge products which were:

1. A guide to establishing community-managed fish conservation zones;
2. A master class for CEPF applicants that provides detailed instruction on project design, M&E, safeguards, procurement and other issues;
3. A web portal focusing on the conservation of bustards;
4. A manual providing guidance to replicate strategies for uptake of sustainable practices;
5. A guide and video documenting best practices for identification and mapping of traditional communities and their territories; and
6. A package of training materials on strengthening women's voices in conservation.

Notably, the project was found to have placed particular emphasis on including products pertaining to gender mainstreaming and indigenous communities in its portfolio of knowledge products, thereby showcasing a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, all six products were found to be publicly available on the CEPF's website and the video materials were made publically available through Youtube. The TE Team also found that five of the six knowledge products were produced in multiple languages including English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, which bolsters their accessibility and promotes wider dissemination among the non-Anglosphere.

Lastly, in addition to the development of 06 knowledge products as stipulated in the design of the project, the evaluation also found that lessons learned, impact stories, and grantees' work was showcased and disseminated through the RITs' and CEPF's channels, such as through the CEPF website, the websites of the RITs, the annual reports, RITs' newsletters, impact reports, and social media. Moreover, the RIT also utilized the Mid-Term Assessment and the Final Assessment Workshops as events for the dissemination of lessons learned to grantees operating in their respective hotspots.

In conclusion, the evaluation found that while a specific Knowledge Management Plan was absent from the Project Document, the project was designed with a strong knowledge generation and dissemination component embedded into its design. Moreover, the evaluation also found that the CEPF and the RITs utilized multiple communications and knowledge dissemination



channels to disseminate the lessons learned, and knowledge products, tools, models, and best practices developed throughout the project duration to various conservation actors such as other RITs, civil society organizations, donors, and project grantees.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the TE found the project to be highly relevant to the goals and priorities of various institutional stakeholders at the global and national level, as well as the needs and objectives of key institutions such as the CI, GEF, and CEPF. Moreover, at the local level, the project was also found to be highly relevant to the needs of civil society working on biodiversity conservation in partnership with local communities across the hotspots as it served to capacitate them and provide direct funding that they would otherwise not be able to access easily.

In fact, the project has built on the **CEPF's extensive thirteen-year experience** over its previous two phases to pilot components of its Phase III Strategic Framework across three biodiversity hotspots, incorporating lessons learned from the previous two phases into the current design. As a result, the project was designed to pivot the CEPF and its partners into longer-term strategic thinking beyond the five-year investment periods and to support institutions that work towards achieving the long-term vision of the CEPF: capacitating civil society in hotspots through provision of grants, to enable them to graduate from CEPF support and continue sustainably implementing biodiversity mainstreaming. The project was mainly implemented through large and small grants to local and international civil society organizations to implement short-term biodiversity conservation projects within their respective hotspots.

In terms of implementation, the TE found that the project's **overall execution arrangements** were in accordance with the project design and GEF guidelines. The project's success was enabled by the highly experienced and seasoned staff at the CEPF as well as the recruitment of high-capacity organizations as RITs. The administration and management of grants were bifurcated between the CEPF and the RITs, with the CEPF responsible for contracting and managing the larger grants while the RITs were responsible for contracting and managing smaller grants. This arrangement was found to be effective as the RITs, based in their respective hotspots, were able to successfully coordinate and manage local civil society organization due to greater mobility, access, and knowledge of local contexts. In addition to better coordination and management, the use of RITs also facilitated the provision of significant support to the grantees, particularly small local civil society organizations, in furthering their knowledge and improving their skills on various aspects of the project cycle including grant proposal development, project design, monitoring and reporting, financial management, and incorporation and effective implementation of environmental and social safeguards through the institution of the Master Class model in the EAM hotspot which was replicated in Indo-Burma.

Nevertheless, while the overall design of the project was sound, TE interviews revealed that **the project could have benefitted from an explicit entry and communications strategy in the Cerrado Hotspot** during its inception phase in order to mitigate the initial challenges faced by the project around raising sufficient awareness and visibility amongst the local civil society in the region. The TE also found that the efficiency of the project was impacted due to the **sheer diversity of type of organizations and the volume of grants**, having placed significant burden on the RITs due to the additional training and hands-on support required to support such grants, spreading the resources and capacities of the RIT thin. Moreover, the significant reporting requirements under the current project, entailing the submission of quarterly financial and technical reports by the RITs which were in turn based on half-yearly reports from the grantees,

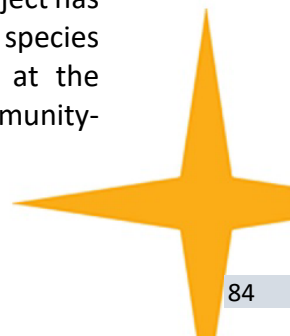


also increased the burden on RITs as it involved significant support to small local civil society organizations lacking the capacity to meet reporting requirements.

In terms of results, the project was found to have successfully delivered on **Outcome 1.1** by developing a long-term vision document for each of the three pilot hotspots that incorporated graduation targets for civil society, included the associated financing plans, and incorporated a set of sector and development policy targets as well as strategies for private sector engagement to mainstream biodiversity conservation. While the project successfully overachieved its target (10 endorsements) by receiving 46 endorsements for the long-term visions, the extent to which the long-term visions were endorsed by other civil society and donor organizations varied across the three hotspots, with the long-term vision for Cerrado receiving the most endorsements (37) compared to the significantly fewer endorsements for long-term visions in the EAM and Indo-Burma hotspots (06 endorsements and 03 endorsements). The TE found that while the long-term visions were considered directly relevant for the CEPF and the RITs tasked with stewarding their implementation, their relevance to other donors as well as civil society organizations was found to be relatively limited. The broad scope of the long-term visions, their regional focus, and limited donor and civil society engagement in the EAM and Indo-Burma hotspots are considered to be constraining factors for their uptake and usability among civil society organizations.

Furthermore, under **Outcome 2.1**, the project was successful in contracting three high-capacity RITs for the duration of the project, but challenges in securing funding for two of the RITs to transition to long-term implementation structures in the EAM and Cerrado was found to deprive these hotspots of stewards in the implementation of long-term visions. Moreover, the TE found that while at the collective level, all hotspots exceeded targets for achieving improvement in collective civil society, the project fell short of its targets on the number of local grantees who showed improvements in CSTT scores of 10% or more. Having said that, the TE found evidence that the CEPF funding and trainings acted as a catalyst for some grantee organizations to secure additional funding from other donor sources through which they were able to scale up and expand their operations and address multiple focal areas of conservation work. However, the project's monitoring of civil society capacity relied mostly on self-assessments without independent verification of results which posed issues of responder bias and reliability. Under **Outcome 2.2**, the project was successful in developing three regional resource mobilization strategies, although their use and effectiveness was found to be limited. However, the project managed to raise the target amount of additional funds in sustainable financing mechanisms and successfully demonstrated 03 innovative models for private sector conservation finance.

With a total of 220 grants over the project implementation period (Apr 2013 to Mar 2022) to 187 civil society organizations across the three hotspots, of which 147 were local civil society organizations (81%), the TE found that the project achieved high-level impact by meeting its targets for influencing public sector policies, introducing biodiversity-friendly practices in the private sector, and introducing new management models in protected areas across the hotspot, in line with the targets for **Outcome 3.1**. Moreover, due to the engagement of diverse organizations and a bottom-up planning approach using calls for innovative ideas, the project has shown impact in extremely diverse areas from journalism to market linkages to species conservation, etc. These grants resulted in the achievement of significant impact at the institutional level, species conservation level, production landscapes level, and the community-



level. However, the achievement of results and impact was found to vary across the hotspots, which revealed the need for a systematic impact assessment across the project's portfolio to uncover learnings on effective strategies and approaches.

Under **Outcome 4.1**, the project was found to have achieved its targets for replicating successful policy demonstration models and best management practices from the pilot hotspots to additional hotspots. Although some progress was made towards establishing long-term implementation structures and developing regional resource mobilization strategies in other hotspots, shifting donor priorities and the global economic downturn brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic dampened the CEPF's efforts to meet its targets. Lastly, the project also successfully developed 06 knowledge products in multiple languages and made them publicly available for use by other biodiversity conservation actors globally under **Outcome 4.2**.

In terms of **sustainability**, the TE found that the extensive history of the CEPF, the successful application of lessons learned from previous phases into subsequent strategic frameworks, and continued donor interest in supporting the work of the CEPF are factors conducive to the long-term sustainability of the project. Nevertheless, financial sustainability remains the most pertinent challenge for the continued sustainability of the project, particularly in the context of the EAM and in the Cerrado where financing for the long-term implementation structures was not secured thereby depriving the two hotspots of stalwarts for the implementation of the CEPF's long-term visions.

In conclusion, the project was found to have achieved significant high-level **impact** in terms of production landscapes under effective biodiversity mainstreaming, number of policy demonstrations, number of biodiversity-friendly management practices instituted within private sector actors, number of threatened species with reduced threats, and number of new management models instituted in protected areas, among others. At the institutional level, the project was also successful at increasing collective civil society capacity in the three hotspots and transitioning one of its RITs (IUCN ARO in Indo-Burma) into a long-term implementation structure. It is also anticipated that the RIT for the Cerrado hotspot (IEB) will have a high likelihood of accessing USD 1.8 million in funding under the GEF-7 STAR allocation. However, the project's impact has varied across the three different hotspots, with a lower community-level impact seen in the Cerrado, and lower proportion of improvement in collective civil society capacity scores as well as number of grantees showing improvements in capacity in the EAM. The TE Team found that throughout its implementation, the project has used a variety of strategies and approaches, such as disbursing large and small grants that have varied in average amounts, type of projects funded, and type of organizations awarded across the hotspots, and significant flexibility to RITs to maneuver in terms of engaging with and supporting grantees and conducting stakeholder engagement. In light of these differences in impact as well as the strategies and approaches used across the three hotspots, a systematic impact assessment of the current project's portfolio across the three hotspots is considered necessary to assess which strategies and approaches have worked well and therefore can be scaled-up and which strategies have not worked as well and may be disbanded in future hotspots.



## 6. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 LESSONS LEARNED

The in-depth review of the project has yielded the following major lessons learned:

- i) The CEPF's entry into a new hotspot should be accompanied by an explicit **entry and communications strategy** which sets aside time and budget to do initial outreach with civil society to raise awareness and visibility regarding the CEPF prior to issuing calls for proposals.
- ii) The **use of the RITs** to contract and manage the small grants component was effective due to their on-the-ground presence and knowledge of local contexts through which they were able to provide hands on and continuous support to local civil society organizations.
- iii) The use of **Master Class model** for providing targeted trainings to project grantees prior to the start of implementation on various aspects of the project cycle was found to be highly beneficial to grantees in terms of improving their knowledge and skills regarding project design, proposal development and implementing project safeguards.
- iv) Sufficient attention should be paid to the risk profiles of project grantees such that the proportion of grantees needing continuous and significant support and hands-on support is minimized to **avoid efficiency losses**.
- v) In terms of gender mainstreaming, the inclusion of women-only organization as grantees should be supplemented by a focus on the **overall active participation of women within grantees' organizations** as well.
- vi) Influencing public sector policy, especially at national levels, as well as business practices of large agrobusiness requires significant stakeholder engagement and relationship building over extended periods of time. Larger grants to more established grantees for longer implementation periods may be more suitable to achieve **higher-level effects on public policies and private sector business practices**.

### 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

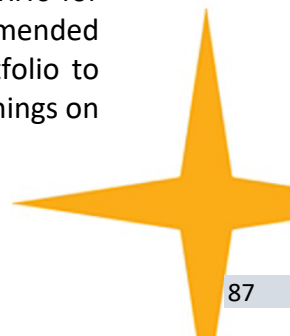
Based on the in-depth assessment of the project, the TE Team presents the following recommendation directed at key stakeholders, including the CEPF and CI-GEF.

#### 6.2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CEPF

1. In light of the early challenges face by the project in garnering sufficient quality applications from civil society in the Cerrado, it is recommended that the CEPF develop **engagement strategies** as part of project design with time and budget allocated towards conducting outreach with key stakeholders such as civil society in any new hotspot that the CEPF enters, so that the CEPF raises its visibility and awareness in the region prior to issuing calls for proposals.



2. The use of the **Master Class model**, as implemented in the EAM, was found to be highly beneficial by the grantees in improving their skills on various aspects of the project cycle from project design and proposal development to monitoring and implementation of safeguards. It is thus recommended that the CEPF adopt the Master Class model across all current and future hotspots it engages in.
3. As part of the long-term visions, the project has incorporated a set of graduation targets for each hotspot to transition from CEPF support. It is recommended that the CEPF undertakes a review of the **graduation benchmarks** in each hotspot to monitor progress made towards their achievement, particularly in light of the global economic downturn that may have impacted the initial timeframes developed in the earlier long-term visions.
4. The TE found that the project was unable to meet its targets for awarding grants to women's group despite repeated efforts to do so. It is therefore recommended that in the future, the CEPF adopt a more flexible approach in setting targets for **women's groups** and consider the active participation of women within project grantees' organizations as an indicator too, instead of only considering women-only organizations.
5. While the project has documented lessons learned and best practices and disseminated them in the form of knowledge products, it is recommended that in the future, the CEPF institute annual stocktaking exercises in the form of a convention or a workshop within each of the hotspots that focus on broader engagement of stakeholders beyond civil society organizations, including donors, private sector, and public sector stakeholders which can be used for the purposes of **dissemination of best practices and lessons learned**, networking between different organizations, and raising the overall profile and visibility of the CEPF in any given hotspot.
6. The TE found that **financial sustainability** of the CEPF's investment is contingent on a host of factors such as donor priorities regarding a hotspot, political environment in a national context, as well as the geographic spread and scope of a hotspot. It is therefore recommended that the CEPF pay specific attention to these crucial factors when planning for long-term investment in any hotspot to enable success of its investments.
7. The TE found that although the project has achieved impact in terms of high-level biodiversity conservation by reducing the threats to threatened species, increasing the area of land under effective biodiversity mainstreaming and introducing new management models in the protected areas across the three hotspots, the impact of the project's portfolio has varied across the hotspots, with the Cerrado having a disproportionately lesser impact in terms of direct benefits to men and women while the EAM has the least proportion of grantees showing improvements of 10% or more. Moreover, this differential level of impact is coincidental with varying levels of approaches and strategies used across the three hotspots in terms of the use of small and large grants whose average amounts have varied across the type of hotspots, types of organizations and types of projects funded, and types of approaches used by RITs for supporting and engaging grantees and other stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that a **systematic impact assessment** be undertaken across the project's portfolio to examine the approaches used in developing portfolio of projects to uncover learnings on



effective strategies and approaches that can be scaled up in other hotspots as well as the types of strategies and approaches that have not been effective in order to re-examine their use in future CEPF investments in other hotspots. The impact assessment may be designed using a mixed-method approach which combines the use of statistical (linear and non-linear regression models) and qualitative approaches that seek to provide clarity on what aspects of a portfolio (e.g: grant size, relative risk profile of grantees, share of local vs international CSOs, the type, frequency, and level of assistance to CSOs, share of grants by Strategic Direction, and other relevant criteria) lead to the higher impact overall as well as in a given socio-economic, political, administrative, and geographic context.

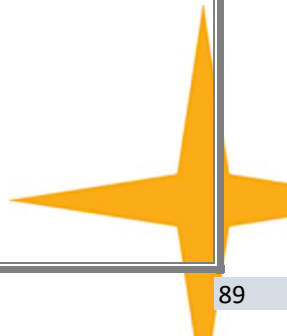
### 6.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CI-GEF

1. The TE found that the reporting requirements placed significant burdens on the CEPF as well as the RITs who had to provide significant additional support to project grantees in meeting their reporting requirements. Therefore, it is recommended that future projects address this issue by simplifying the **reporting processes**.
2. Local civil society organizations and RITs across the three hotspots highlighted the need to simplify and streamline the project's **safeguards** in the context of administering small grant amounts to smaller organizations, often lacking the necessary organizational capacity and infrastructure, for projects with shorter durations and making them fit for purpose. It is therefore recommended that the CI-GEF, in collaboration with CEPF, undertake a review of the safeguard mechanisms and requirements in the context of small grants so that they are easier to understand and implement for such projects.

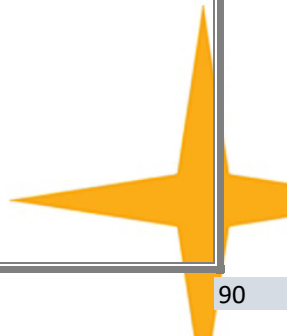




# ANNEXES

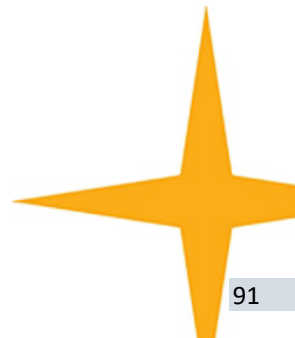


# **ANNEX 01: PROJECT OUTCOMES & OUTPUTS**



## PROJECT RESULTS FRAME OUTLINING THE OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

#	PROJECT OBJECTIVE		
	To demonstrate innovative tools, methodologies and investments, and build related capacities through which civil society in three pilot biodiversity hotspots, in partnership with public and private sector actors can cost effectively conserve biodiversity and progress towards long-term institutional sustainability, and to replicate demonstrated approaches in nine additional hotspots		
#	Component	Outcome	Output
1	<b><u>Developing long-term conservation vision, financing plans and associated strategies for biodiversity hotspots</u></b>	<p><b>Outcome 1.1:</b> Long-term <u>conservation visions developed</u> for the Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane and Indo-Burma Hotspots, with participation of civil society government, donor and private sector actors</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicators and Targets:</b> Outcome Indicator 1.1.1: 03 Long-term visions incorporating resource mobilization strategies and policy targets</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 1.1.2: 03 pilot hotspots with graduation targets</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 1.1.3: 10 endorsements of long-term visions</p>	<p><b>Output 1.1.1:</b> <u>Targets for civil society capacity building</u> set for 3 pilot hotspots</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.2:</b> Three <u>financing plans</u> describing the funding and projections defined for implementation of the long-term conservation visions.</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.3:</b> Sector and/or development <u>policy targets</u> for addressing key drivers of biodiversity loss set in three pilot hotspots</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.4:</b> Strategies for <u>engagement with private sector</u> actors for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into business practices of industries driving biodiversity loss completed for three pilot hotspots</p>
2	<b><u>Ensuring the financial and institutional sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs</u></b>	<p><b>Outcome 2.1:</b> Increased <u>capacity and credibility of conservation-focused civil societies</u> in the Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane and Indo-Burma Hotspots</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicators and Targets:</b> Outcome Indicator 2.1.1: 03 pilot hotspots with 20% improvement in collective civil society capacity</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 2.1.2: 60 grantees (at least 5 Indigenous People’s organizations and women’s groups each) with 10%</p>	<p><b>Output 2.1.1:</b> <u>Long-term implementation structures</u> in place for each of the 3 pilot hotspots</p> <p><b>Output 2.1.2:</b> Civil societies in the 3 pilot hotspots with sufficient organizational and technical <u>capacity</u> for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity</p>



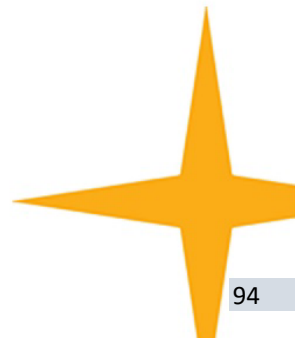
	<p>improvement in civil society capacity</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 2.1.3: 30 grantees with 20% improvement in gender mainstreaming capacity</p>		
	<p><b>Outcome 2.2:</b> Increased and more sustained <u>financial flows</u> to civil societies engaged in the conservation of biodiversity, from diverse sources, including non-traditional sources</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicators and Targets:</b> Outcome Indicator 2.2.1: USD 20 million of additional funding in sustainable financing mechanisms, including USD 5 million from non-traditional sources and USD 2 million from private sector models</p>	<p><b>Output 2.2.1:</b> <u>Three regional resource mobilization strategies developed</u> to generate additional revenue for conservation programs in the 3 pilot hotspots.</p> <p><b>Output 2.2.2:</b> At least <u>2 innovative models for private sector conservation finance</u>, such as biodiversity offsets, demonstrated in the pilot hotspots</p>	
3	<p><b><i>Amplifying the impacts of CEPF investments through enhanced and innovative public and private sector partnerships</i></b></p>	<p><b>Outcome 3.1:</b> Integrating biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into <u>production landscapes</u> implemented with public and private sector actors across at least total <u>1,000,000 hectares</u> in the Cerrado, Eastern Afrotropical and Indo-Burma Hotspots</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicators and Targets:</b> Outcome Indicator 3.1.1: 1 million hectares of production landscapes with effective biodiversity mainstreaming</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 3.1.2: 20 protected areas with new management models</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 3.1.3: 20 globally threatened species with reduced threats to their populations</p>	<p><b>Output 3.1.1:</b> At least <u>6 policies, programs or plans</u> incorporate results of policy demonstration models addressing drivers of biodiversity loss in the pilot hotspots</p> <p><b>Output 3.1.2:</b> At least <u>12 biodiversity-friendly management practices</u> incorporated into the business practices of key change agents in the agriculture, energy, mining and other sectors</p> <p><b>Output 3.1.3:</b> <u>New management models</u> involving direct participation of CSOs or indigenous and local communities are introduced at 20 protected areas</p>



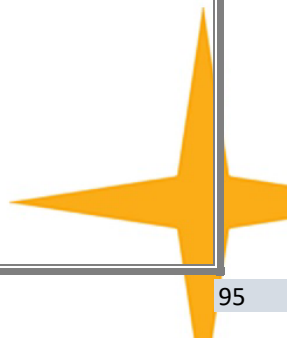
4		<p>Outcome Indicator 3.1.4: 06 conservation corridors with enhanced ecological connectivity</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 3.1.5: 250 communities with increased, gender-equitable access to ecosystem services</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 3.1.6: 25,000 women and 25,000 men with direct socio-economic benefits</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 3.17: 125,000 women and 125,000 men with indirect socio-economic benefits</p>	
	<p><b><i>Replicating success through <u>knowledge products and tools</u></i></b></p>	<p><b>Outcome 4.1:</b> CEPF investments in <u>other hotspots strengthened</u> through the adoption of successful models and tools developed in the pilot hotspots</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicators and Targets:</b> Outcome Indicator 4.1.1: 09 additional hotspots with long-term implementation structures</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 4.1.2: 09 additional hotspots with regional resource mobilization strategies</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 4.1.3: 02 policy demonstration models adopted in at least one additional hotspot</p> <p>Outcome Indicator 4.1.4: 02 management best practices adopted in at least one additional hotspot</p>	<p><b>Output 4.1.1:</b> Long-term implementation structures incorporating experiences from the pilot hotspots in place in at least <u>9 other biodiversity hotspots</u> where CEPF invests</p> <p><b>Output 4.1.2:</b> Regional <u>resource mobilization strategies incorporate lessons learned</u> to supplement global resources and better align resources with regional funders to achieve long-term sustainability in at least 9 other biodiversity hotspots where CEPF invests</p> <p><b>Output 4.1.3:</b> At least <u>2 countries in other biodiversity hotspots adopt successful policy demonstration models</u> from the pilot hotspots</p> <p><b>Output 4.1.4:</b> At least <u>2 countries in other biodiversity hotspots replicate management practices</u> for mainstreaming biodiversity through innovative partnerships of civil society and private sector.</p>
		<p><b>Outcome 4.2:</b> <u>Models, tools and best practices</u> developed under the project are</p>	<p><b>Output 4.2.1:</b> At least <u>6 innovative knowledge products</u> documenting models, tools and best</p>



		<p>widely available and inform other actors developing public-private partnerships for biodiversity conservation globally</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicators and Targets:</b> Outcome Indicator 4.2.1: 3 models, tools and/or best practices adopted in areas outside CEPF investments</p>	<p>practices developed under the project, including at least 1 related to gender mainstreaming and at least 1 related to Indigenous People and conservation, made publicly available through the CEPF website or other innovative means as appropriate</p>
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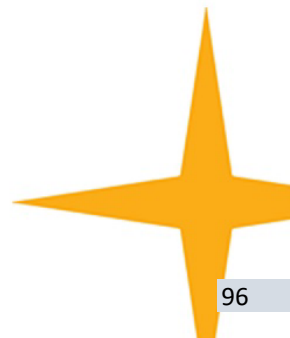


# **ANNEX 02: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**



## LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

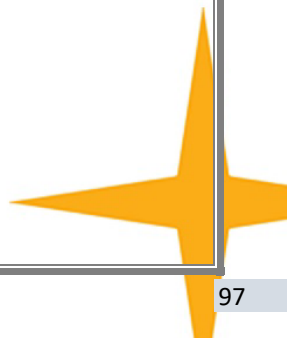
- ❖ *Terms Of Reference for the MTR*
- ❖ *CI-GEF Project Document*
- ❖ *CI-GEF CEPF Project Inception Report*
- ❖ *Annual Workplans [FY18 – FY22]*
- ❖ *Civil Society Tracking Tool*
- ❖ *Gender Tracking Tool*
- ❖ *Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool*
- ❖ *Annual Project Implementation Reports [FY17 – FY22]*
- ❖ *Quarterly Technical and Financial Reports [Q4 2016 – Q2 2022]*
- ❖ *CEO Endorsement*
- ❖ *Internal evaluation: Effectiveness of the resource mobilization strategies developed in leveraging additional resources for conservation programs in the Indo-Burma and Eastern Afromontane hotspots*
- ❖ *Database of Project Grants*
- ❖ *Donor Council Minutes [28<sup>th</sup> Donor Council Meeting – 38<sup>th</sup> Donor Council Meeting]*
- ❖ *Evaluation of CEPF Long-term Vision Exercises*
- ❖ *Mid-term Evaluation of the CI-GEF Project ID: 5735*
- ❖ *Stakeholder Engagement Plan*
- ❖ *Gender Mainstreaming Plan*
- ❖ *Outreach and Communication Materials*
- ❖ *Project Results Framework*
- ❖ *Organizational Structure*
- ❖ *Plans related to the Environmental and Social Safeguards*





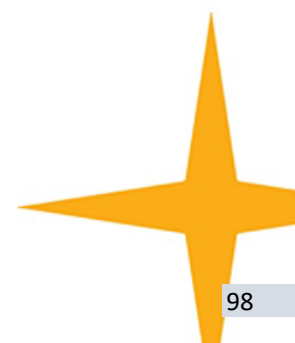
# **ANNEX 03:**

## **LIST OF INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS**



## LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH STAKEHOLDERS

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS					
#	RESPONDENT(S)	ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION/ROLE	COUNTRY	DATE INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
1	Free de Koning	CI-GEF	Vice President, Project Development and Impact, CI-GEF Agency	USA	April 21, 2022
2	Jack Tordoff, Dan Rothberg Peggy Poncelet Chris Macfarlane Nina Marshall Walid Mediouni	CEPF Secretariat	Managing Director, Indo-Burma Grant Director, EAM Grant Director, Cerrado Grants Coordinator Senior Director of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Outreach Senior Director, Finance and Operations	USA	April 22, 2022
3	Michael Becker	Instituto Internacional de Educacao do Brasil (IEB)	RIT Leader	Brazil	April 27, 2022
4	Alexander McWilliam Scott Perkin James Tallant	IUCN Asia Regional Office	RIT Manager RIT Director Consultant	Thailand	May 06, 2022
5	Maaike Manten	BirdLife	RIT Leader	Rwanda	May 10, 2022
6	Sarah Wyatt	GEF	Biodiversity Specialist	USA	May 24, 2022
7	Ouk Vibol	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries	Director, Department of Fisheries Conservation	Cambodia	May 25, 2022
8	Shelley Shreffler	Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies	Program Officer, Environment	USA	June 01, 2022
9	Ian Kissoon	CI-GEF	Director, Environment and Social Management	USA	June 08, 2022

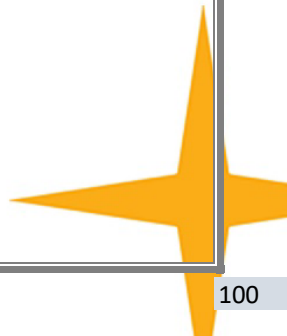


IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS					
#	RESPONDENT(S)	ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION/ROLE	COUNTRY	DATE INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
1	Manuel Alves Junior	Cooperago familiar	Director	Brazil	May 04, 2022
2	Juliano Tarabal e Agnaldo de Castro	FUNDACCER	Director	Brazil	May 10, 2022
3	Nathalia Ziolkowsky Andre Luiz Siqueira	ECCOA	Director Project Manager	Brazil	May 16, 2022
4	Olivier Nsengimana	Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association	Founder and Executive Director	Rwanda	May 19, 2022
5	Jabes Okumu	East African Wildlife Society	Programs and Advocacy Manager	Kenya	May 24, 2022
6	Dr. Medard Twinamatsiko	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	Project Director	Uganda	June 06, 2022
7	Passakorn J.	Trans-boundary Journalists and Communicators Association		Thailand	May 23, 2022
8	U Myint Aung	Friends of Wildlife		Myanmar	May 26, 2022
9	Socheat Keo	Sansom Mlup Prey	Executive Director	Cambodia	May 26, 2022

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS					
#	TYPE OF RESPONDENTS	GRANTEE ASSOCIATED WITH	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	LOCATION	DATE CONDUCTED
1	Local Farmers	FUNDACCER	03	Sao Joao de Serra Negra, Municipality of Patrocinio, Brazil	May 11, 2022
2	Members of Lake Ol Bolossat Community Conservation Group	East African Wildlife Society	07	Ksuku, Nyandarua County, Kenya	May 21, 2022
3	Members of Agriculture Cooperative	Sansom Mlup Prey	05	Prolay Communes, Stoung District, Kampong Thom Province, Cambodia	May 27, 2022



# **ANNEX 04: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

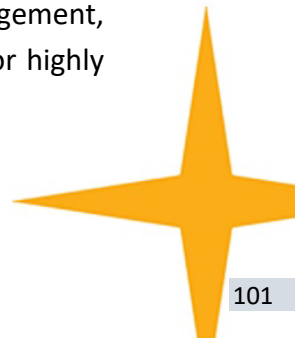


**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET  
 TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR  
 “Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy  
 and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical  
 Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale” Program**

CEPF Secretariat (PMU)	
<b>1. Name of the Respondent</b>	
<b>2. Designation</b>	
<b>3. Contact Details</b>	
<b>4. Location</b>	
<b>5. Date of KII</b>	
<b>6. Starting Time of KII</b>	
<b>7. Finishing Time of KII</b>	

## PROJECT DESIGN

1. How does the current project fit into the priorities of the CEPF?
2. What were the timeline and process of project design? E.g. consultations, baseline studies, meetings, etc.
3. Were any of the key management staff from the Project Team currently working on the project involved in the project design? If yes, who? And what was the role of these staff members?
4. What challenges were faced during the design phase? E.g. limited baseline information, lack of stakeholder consensus, etc.
5. Based on your experience of implementing this project, what have been the major positive elements of the project design? E.g. flexibility, approach to financial management, partnership, and inclusion of particular activities that are easy to implement and/or highly welcomed by beneficiaries, SMART logframe, etc. Please elaborate.



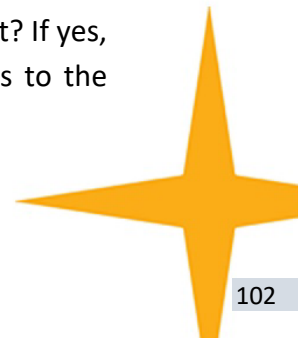
6. And, what have been the major elements of design that are resulting in implementation problems? E.g. three-tier model (CEPF-RIT-CSOs), ambitious targets, ambiguity in activities, etc. Please explain.
7. What, if any, were the changes in project design that were implemented in light of the recommendations from the MTR of the project?
  - a. To what extent were these changes implemented?
  - b. What have been the effect on overall project management, operations, and design as a result of implementing these changes?

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

8. What is the role of the CEPF as the executing agency of this project?
9. What is the composition of the CEPF Secretariat? What are the functions of the various teams within the CEPF Secretariat in terms of the current project?
10. What is the functional relationship between the CEPF Secretariat and: a) the Donor Council; b) the Regional Implementation Teams (RITs); c) the Working Group; and d) CSOs provided large grants?
11. Overall, to what extent have the project's execution arrangements been effective in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project?
12. Have there been changes in the management structure over the course of the project's implementation? If so, what were the reasons for the changes and to what extent did they mitigate the challenges faced as a result of the management structure?
13. What are the major management challenges faced by the CEPF Secretariat in delivering its responsibilities? E.g. stakeholder capacity, internal capacity, post-COVID-19 global financial conditions, etc. How were/can some of these challenges mitigated? Please provide details.

## ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

14. What were the major activities undertaken and decisions made during the Inception phase?
15. Was a review of project logical framework undertaken at any time during the project? If yes, what were these changes? And what were the reasons for making these changes to the design?



16. Were these changes formally integrated into the project logical framework or project design? If yes, when?
17. What was the process of seeking approval for these amendments to the original design?

## EFFECTIVENESS

### OVERALL

18. What challenges and opportunities has the CEPF Secretariat faced in project implementation? Please provide an overview of each project outcome and output.
19. To what extent, if any, have regional differences emerged in the implementation of the project across the three biodiversity hotspots?
20. Which project targets have been achieved and overachieved so far? What were the supporting factors responsible for meeting or exceeding these targets?
21. What are the major implementation challenges faced by the CEPF Secretariat with respect to accomplishing targets for Components 1, 2, 3, and 4?
22. Which project outputs/activities were/are delayed? And what were /are the reasons for these delays?
23. How do these delays affect progress of other project outputs and what is the effect on overall project?
24. What mitigation measures were undertaken to bring these activities back on track? To what extent were these measures effective?

### <COMPONENT-SPECIFIC PROBES>

25. What opportunities and challenges did the project face in developing and obtaining endorsement for the long-term visions, financing plans, sector and/or development policy targets, and strategies for biodiversity mainstreaming within the business sector for each of three biodiversity hotspots? What strategies did the project use to mitigate these challenges?  
[COMPONENT 1]



26. What specific challenges did the project face in establishing the RITs in each of biodiversity hotspots? What strategies did the project use to mitigate these challenges and to what extent were they effective? [COMPONENT 2]
27. What specific challenges did the project face with regards to the availability of funding through sustainable funding mechanisms in each of the three biodiversity hotspots? To what extent was the project able to overcome the challenges it faced? [COMPONENT 2]
28. What mechanisms did the project use to advertise and attract proposals from CSOs for small and large grants? To what extent was the project successful in attracting quality proposals? [COMPONENT 3]
29. What were some of the reasons for the prioritization of awarding small grants in comparison to large grants? What challenges and opportunities emerged as a result of this? [COMPONENT 3]

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

30. What are the major monitoring and evaluation responsibilities of the CEPF Secretariat?
31. Are any challenges faced when using the project's logical framework for monitoring progress? E.g. ambitious or non SMART indicators, long list of activities to be monitored, etc.?
32. What is the monitoring activity undertaken by each of the key project stakeholders, including CEPF Secretariat, CI-GEF, RITs, and CSOs, etc., e.g. monitoring visits, reports, etc.
33. How/Where is the M&E data collected, stored, and analyzed?
34. What level of oversight did CEPF have on the RITs' monitoring of the performance of small grants?
35. What have been major challenges with collecting and reporting M&E data by each stakeholder? How has this affect progress reporting? E.g. delay in submission of reports, etc.
36. What special efforts are being made to collect gender-segregated data, stakeholder data, and E&S impact data?





37. How has the M&E been helpful in timely indication of critical gaps in implementation? Please provide examples.
38. Were any of the key project planning decisions based on M&E data? If yes, please provide examples.

## STAFFING

39. How many staff are working at the CEPF Secretariat? And what are the roles and responsibilities of these staff members?
40. Has this staff been sufficient for managing the project? If no, why not?
41. What measures are taken to bolster staffing capacity? E.g. hiring of short-term experts
42. Have there been any major changes in staffing during the period of implementation? E.g. staff turnover, or addition/elimination of positions, etc.
43. What are some of the staffing challenges faced by the CEPF Secretariat? E.g. limited availability of local staff, difficult to engage field staff, high turnover, etc.
44. Does the project face any challenges in engaging good quality experts to provide TA? If yes, what are the key challenges and how can these be mitigated?

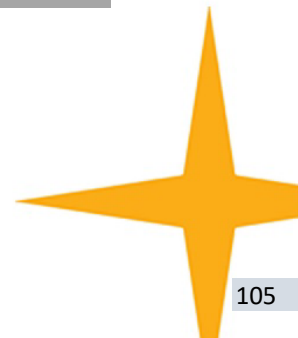
## FINANCE

### GEF Fund

45. Has the project faced any problems with financing? E.g. late approvals, difficult reporting processes, unrealistic budgeting at design or AWP stage, etc.?
46. Has the project faced any problems with financing availability? E.g. late approvals, difficult reporting processes, unrealistic budgeting at design or AWP stage, etc.?
47. How have these issues affected the project's performance? And what measures have been taken thus far to resolve some of these issues?

### Co-Financing

48. Who are the main contributors to co-finance?



49. How is the project's co-financing tracked?

50. What can be done to improve the tracking of project's co-financing?

51. What measures can be taken to enhance/increase the co-financing levels currently being provided?

## TIMELINESS

52. What planned activities have faced major delays? And what were the causes of these delays? E.g. COVID-19, capacity of stakeholders, seasonality, lengthy procurement and/or approval processes, etc.

53. How did these delays affect the project implementation? And what measures were taken to overcome the factors causing delays?

54. On what basis was the decision to grant the project a one-year no cost extension made? Was it successful in achieving its intended goal(s)?

## GRANT/RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

55. What are the main coordination mechanisms/arrangements utilized by the CEPF to manage its grantees?

56. What has worked well in terms of effective collaboration with different types of grantees across different biodiversity hotspots?

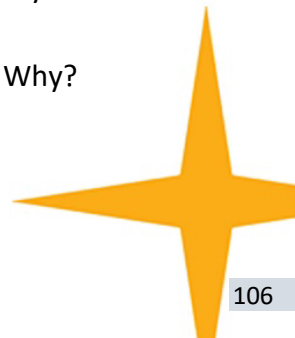
57. What have been major challenges faced by the project when collaborating with different types of grantees across different regions?

## IMPACT

58. Has the project undertaken a midline survey to assess the progress of social and environmental indicators?

59. In your opinion, which project activities have had the highest potential for impact? Why?

60. Also, which project activities do you think have had the lowest potential for impact? Why?



61. How can the potential impact of these activities be enhanced?

## **SUSTAINABILITY AND RISKS**

62. Of the activities implemented thus far, which are the most sustainable? Why? E.g. replicability by private sector or other development projects, change of government legislation, improved practices by industry, etc. Similarly, which activities are the least sustainable? Why?

63. How well-positioned are the RITs to evolve into long-term implementing structures as a result of this project?

64. What are the actual or potential threats to the sustainability of the implemented or planned activities by the project?

65. What are your recommendations for improving the likelihood of sustainability of project current or planned outputs and outcomes?

## **ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS**

### **Gender**

66. What measures have been taken to ensure inclusion/mainstreaming of women's concerns in the project activities?

67. What have been the major challenges and opportunities regarding gender integration into project activities?

68. How are these being dealt with to ensure the achievement of project outcomes?

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

69. Who are the major types of stakeholders of the project?

70. What are the different ways in which various stakeholder types, including grantees, local communities, public, and private sector, etc., have been engaged in the project activities?

71. What steps has the project undertaken to ensure that its various deliverables (long-term visions, financing plans, long-term implementation structures, etc) were delivered through effective stakeholder engagement?



72. How are community members selected for participation in /benefiting from project activities?
73. How does the CEPF ensure that the community members have selected according to the established criteria?
74. What have been major challenges faced by the project when collaborating with each type of partners and stakeholders? E.g. extensive variety of partners, limited capacity, etc.
75. What measures are taken to ensure that women and indigenous communities are actively involved in the project's activities?

## Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms (AGM)

76. How does the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) work? What have been the observed shortcomings of the system?
77. What measures have been taken to improve the system?

## Knowledge Management And Dissemination

78. What mechanisms and tools does the project have in place to organize and store knowledge gathered and generated during the course of project implementation? E.g. knowledge management strategy, development of newsletter, etc.
79. What methods of dissemination is the project using to share this information with beneficiaries and various stakeholders, e.g. participating communities, researchers, training institutions, policy and planning departments, etc.
80. How have knowledge management and dissemination activities undertaken by the project been effective? Please provide examples.
81. How can the knowledge management and dissemination activities of the project be improved?

## LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

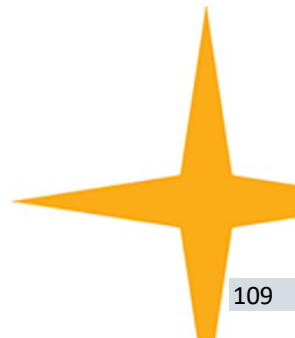
82. Based on your experience, what are the major lessons learned from:
- a. Project design;
  - b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
  - c. Monitoring and evaluation;



- d. Adaptive management;
- e. Sustainability; and
- f. Impact

83. What are your overall recommendations for the improvement of the following for similar future programmes:

- a. Project design;
- b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
- c. Monitoring and evaluation;
- d. Adaptive management;
- e. Sustainability; and
- f. Impact



**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET  
 TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR  
 “Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy  
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 Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale” Program**

Regional Implementation Teams	
<b>1. Name of the Respondent</b>	
<b>2. Designation</b>	
<b>3. Name of Organization</b>	
<b>4. Contact Details</b>	
<b>5. Location</b>	
<b>6. Date of KII</b>	
<b>7. Starting Time of KII</b>	
<b>8. Finishing Time of KII</b>	

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

1. When was your organization awarded the role of regional implementation team for the current project? Please provide details of what this role entails.
2. What is the composition of your regional implementation team? What are the functions of the various teams within the RIT in terms of the current project?
3. What is the functional relationship between your organization as an RIT of the project and the CEPF Secretariat?
4. Overall, to what extent have the project’s execution arrangements been effective in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project?



5. Have there been changes in the management structure over the course of the project's implementation? If so, what were the reasons for the changes and to what extent did they mitigate the challenges faced as a result of the management structure?
6. What are the major management challenges faced by your organization in delivering its responsibilities? E.g. stakeholder capacity, internal capacity, post-COVID-19 global financial conditions, etc. How were/can some of these challenges mitigated? Please provide details.
7. What challenges, if any, did your organization face in terms of the disbursements of grant funding: a) from the CEPF to your organization; and b) from your organization to the CSO/grantee? What impacts, if any, did these challenges have on the overall progress towards results as well as the management of the project?

## Grants Management

8. How many grantees was your organization responsible for managing?
9. What mechanisms for outreach did your organization utilize for socializing and soliciting proposals in response to calls for proposals?
10. To what extent were these mechanisms effective in garnering sufficient number of quality proposals?
11. What mechanisms of oversight and progress tracking did your organization (as an RIT) have over the grantees?
12. What were some of the challenges your organization faced at various stages of the grant management process? What steps were taken by your organization to address these challenges and to what extent were these steps successful in mitigating the effects?
13. What are the different ways in which various stakeholder types, including grantees, local communities, public, and private sector, etc., have been engaged in the project activities?
14. How were community members selected for participation in /benefiting from project activities?
15. To what extent did the grantees meet their reporting requirements? What challenges, if any, did your organization face in that regard?



## Monitoring and Evaluation

16. What are the major monitoring and evaluation responsibilities of your organizations as an RIT?
17. Are any challenges faced when using the project's logical and or M&E framework for monitoring progress? E.g. ambitious or non-SMART indicators, long list of activities to be monitored, etc.?
18. How/Where is the M&E data collected, stored, and analyzed?
19. What have been major challenges with collecting and reporting M&E data by each stakeholder? How has this affect progress reporting? E.g. delay in submission of reports, etc.
20. What special efforts are being made to collect gender-segregated data, stakeholder data, and E&S impact data?
21. How has the M&E been helpful in timely indication of critical gaps in implementation? Please provide examples.

## Capacity Building

22. What support has the project and CEPF provided to your organization to ensure its evolution into a long-term implementation structure?
23. To what extent has this support enabled the realization of this outcome? What have been the key gaps and challenges with the project's approach in enabling this outcome?
24. What additional measures need to be undertaken to fill the gaps in terms of financing, technical capacity, advocacy and reach to enable your organization to evolve into a long-term implementation structure?
25. What role did your organization play in building the capacity of CSOs awarded small grants?

## IMPACT

26. Has the project undertaken a midline survey to assess the progress of social and environmental indicators?
27. In your opinion, which project activities have had the highest potential for impact? Why?





28. Also, which project activities do you think have had the lowest potential for impact? Why?

29. How can the potential impact of these activities be enhanced?

## SUSTAINABILITY AND RISKS

30. Of the activities implemented thus far, which are the most sustainable? Why? E.g. replicability by private sector or other development projects, change of government legislation, improved practices by industry, etc. Similarly, which activities are the least sustainable? Why?

31. How well-positioned are the RITs to evolve into long-term implementing structures as a result of this project?

32. What are the actual or potential threats to the sustainability of the implemented or planned activities by the project?

33. What are your recommendations for improving the likelihood of sustainability of similar future projects?

## ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

### Gender

34. What measures have been taken to ensure inclusion/mainstreaming of women's concerns in the project activities?

35. What have been the major challenges and opportunities regarding gender integration into project activities?

36. How are these being dealt with to ensure the achievement of project outcomes?

### Stakeholder Engagement

37. Who are the major types of stakeholders of the project?

38. What are the different ways in which various stakeholder types, including grantees, local communities, public, and private sector, etc., have been engaged in the project activities?



39. What steps has the project undertaken to ensure that its various deliverables (long-term visions, financing plans, long-term implementation structures, etc) were delivered through effective stakeholder engagement?
40. How are community members selected for participation in /benefiting from project activities?
41. How does your organization ensure that the community members have selected according to the established criteria?
42. What have been major challenges faced by the project when collaborating with each type of partners and stakeholders? E.g. extensive variety of partners, limited capacity, etc.
43. What measures are taken to ensure that women and indigenous communities are actively involved in the project's activities?

## LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

44. Based on your experience, what are the major lessons learned from:
  - a. Project design;
  - b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
  - c. Monitoring and evaluation;
  - d. Adaptive management;
  - e. Sustainability; and
  - f. Impact
45. What are your overall recommendations for the improvement of the following, for similar future programmes:
  - a. Project design;
  - b. Execution and implementation arrangements;
  - c. Monitoring and evaluation;
  - d. Adaptive management;
  - e. Sustainability; and
  - f. Impact



**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET  
 TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR  
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 and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical  
 Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale” Program**

Donors	
<b>1. Name of the Respondent</b>	
<b>2. Designation</b>	
<b>3. Name of Organization</b>	
<b>4. Contact Details</b>	
<b>5. Location</b>	
<b>6. Date of KII</b>	
<b>7. Starting Time of KII</b>	
<b>8. Finishing Time of KII</b>	

**Donor Council and the Working Group**

1. What is your organization’s role and level of participation/representation in the Donor Council and the Working Group? How effective have these mechanism been in ensuring progress towards goals and outcomes?
2. Who are the members of the Donor Council and the Working Group? What are their functional titles/positions?
3. What is the overall role and function of the Donor Council and the Working Group? What is the functional relationship between the Donor Council and the CEPF Secretariat and the Working Group?
4. When and how often did the Donor Council and the Working Group meet? Did the Donor Council and Working Group meet regularly at the established meeting schedule?



5. Were there any challenges in convening the Donor Council and/or the Working Group? If so, how did these challenges impact the ability of the Donor Council to effectively function as a governing body; and the Working Group as a technical guidance body?
6. What measures were taken to ensure that the Donor Council and/or Working Group convened on time and was effective?
7. What were some of the major decisions taken by the Donor Council that were instrumental in either helping the project achieve its intended outcomes OR changing the course of the project/selected activities?
8. What were some of the major decisions and/or inputs by the Working Group that were instrumental in either helping the project achieve its intended outcomes OR changing the course of the project/selected activities?
9. Did the role of the Donor Council and/or the Working Group change over the course of the project's lifespan? If so, please elaborate.
10. What support did the CEPF Secretariat and the CI-GEF Agency provide to the Donor Council and the Working Group?

## Donor Priorities and Perceptions

11. What are the development priorities of your organization in [biodiversity hotspot]? And who are your key program implementing partners?
12. How does the current project fit into these development priorities?
13. Was your organization involved in the design of the current project? If so, please elaborate on the role your organization played.
14. What challenges, if any, has your organization faced with regards to the design of the current project? And how were these challenges overcome?
15. What factors influenced your decision to partner with CI-GEF on the current project?
16. As a donor, do you find the reporting and communications coming from the CEPF to be fit for purpose for your understanding of the progress of the programme?



## Lessons Learned and Recommendations

17. What are some of the lessons learned and recommendations for improved implementation of similar future projects from your perspective?
18. Based on your experience, to what extent do you think the current project has potential to be replicated in other biodiversity hotspot beyond the three piloted for this project?
19. What is your overall perception regarding the long-term sustainability of the outcomes and outputs achieved under the current project?



**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI) SHEET  
 TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR  
 “Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy  
 and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical  
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Grantees	
<b>9. Name of the Respondent</b>	
<b>10. Designation</b>	
<b>11. Name of Organization</b>	
<b>12. Contact Details</b>	
<b>13. Location</b>	
<b>14. Date of KII</b>	
<b>15. Starting Time of KII</b>	
<b>16. Finishing Time of KII</b>	

**Introduction and Background**

1. Please provide an overview of your organization. What sector(s) is your organization involved in; and what activities is it engaged in.
2. Please provide an overview of your project.
3. What experience does your organization have implementing similar projects in size and scale?
4. What are the various types of challenges faced by local CSOs in the context of the areas where you operate?
5. How and to what extent does the current CEPF project address these challenges and constraints?



## Engagement Process

6. How did you find out about the grant opportunity from CEPF/the RIT?
7. In your opinion, how effective were the outreach mechanisms used by the CEPF/RIT in ensuring that the call for proposals/grant opportunity was disseminated to a wide audience?

## Project Implementation and Management

8. Overall, to what extent have the CEPF project's implementation arrangements been effective in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project?
9. What have been the major benefits/opportunities in working with CEPF and/or the RIT throughout the implementation of your project?
10. What are the major management challenges faced by your organization in delivering its responsibilities? E.g. stakeholder capacity, internal capacity, post-COVID-19 global financial conditions, etc. How were/can some of these challenges mitigated? Please provide details.
11. What challenges, if any, did your organization face in terms of the disbursements of grant funding from the CEPF to your organization (in case large grantee)/the RIT to your organization? What impacts, if any, did these challenges have on the overall progress towards results as well as the management of the project?
12. What support have you received from CEPF/RIT for the implementation of your project activities?
13. What have been the challenges, if any, in your working relationship with CEPF/RIT throughout the implementation period?
14. What have been the major challenges faced by your organization when implementing project activities? E.g., accessibility, community buy-in, activity timelines, etc. What measures were undertaken to ensure that these challenges were overcome?

## Stakeholder Engagement

15. Who are the major types of stakeholders of the project?
16. What are the different ways in which various stakeholder types, including grantees, local communities, public, and private sector, etc., have been engaged in the project activities?



17. What steps has your organization undertaken to ensure that its various deliverables were delivered through effective stakeholder engagement?
18. How are community members selected for participation in /benefiting from project activities?
19. How does your organization ensure that the community members have selected according to the established criteria?
20. What have been major challenges faced by the project when collaborating with each type of partners and stakeholders? E.g. extensive variety of partners, limited capacity, etc.
21. What measures are taken to ensure that women and indigenous communities are actively involved in the project's activities?

## Sustainability

22. What technical and capacity building support, if any, was your organization provided to improve the effectiveness of your organization's implementation and long-term sustainability?
23. What are the actual or potential threats to the sustainability of the implemented or planned activities by your organization?
24. What additional measures need to be undertaken to fill the gaps in terms of financing, technical capacity, advocacy and reach to enable the long-term sustainability of the project?
25. Based on your experience, what are the major lessons learned from implementing the project in terms of overall management arrangements, effectiveness and progress towards results, and long-term impact and sustainability of project activities?
26. What are your recommendations for improving the likelihood of sustainability of similar future projects?



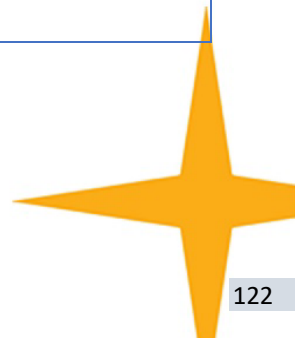


**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) SHEET**  
**TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR**  
**“Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy**  
**and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical**  
**Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale” Program**

COMMUNITY MEMBERS/CSO BENEFICIARIES	
<b>1. Name of Administrative Area</b>	
<b>2. Name of Village</b>	
<b>3. Name of Country</b>	
<b>4. Average number of households in the community</b>	
<b>5. Distance of Project Site from nearest road</b>	
<b>6. Major sources of livelihood</b>	
<b>7. Date of FGD</b>	
<b>8. Starting Time of FGD</b>	
<b>9. Finishing Time of FGD</b>	



Sr. No.	Name	National ID	Contact	Signature/ Thumb Impression
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				



## BACKGROUND

1. What activities have been implemented / is being implemented by the [CSO name] project in your community? E.g. assessment, training, NRM / WRM activities, etc.
2. When did the project initiate these activities?
3. What is the number of households participating in this activity from your community? And how many men and women are participating in this activity?
4. What and how was the process of initially engaging your community? Please elaborate. E.g. communication through local government bodies, etc.
5. Why did your community agree to participate in the project activities? Please elaborate the reasons?

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

6. What have been the advantages or are the potential advantages to your community for participating in the project activities?
7. Are there any particular advantages to women and girls from participation in the project activities? If yes, please elaborate.
8. Through the implementation of these activities, has the project helped establish linkages of your community with other stakeholders for ongoing collaboration? E.g. government departments, NGOs, other communities, etc. If yes, please elaborate who the linkages were developed and what are the potential advantages of these?
9. What have been the challenges faced by your community while participating in the project activities? E.g. the locations were selected without consultation with the community, the activities require a lot of time, are difficult to understand, or cannot be implemented in reality, etc.
10. Did women in the community face any particular challenges in addition to the above issues elaborated? If yes, what were these?
11. Did you report these problems to the project? If yes, what was the response from the project?



12. What are the future activities, if any, that your community will be undertaking with the project?

13. What potential benefits do you think will your community derive from these activities?

## COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

14. Has your community received any awareness materials from the project? E.g. newsletters, videos, flyers, etc.?

15. If yes, how are these useful to you? Please elaborate?

16. And what problems do you face with using these products? E.g. cannot read, they are not easy to understand, the messages in them are difficult to implement, etc.

17. Do you have any recommendations for the project to improve the implementation approach or nature of activities? If yes, please elaborate.

## OTHER DEVELOPMENT WORK

18. Are there any other development projects being implemented in your community? If yes, who is implementing these projects? E.g. government agency, NGO, etc.

19. And what are the main activities being implemented by the project? Please elaborate.

20. Since when has the project been implemented in your community?



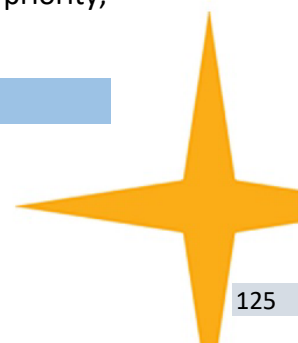
**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET  
 TERMINAL EVALUATION FOR  
 “Effectively Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Government Policy  
 and Private Sector Practice Piloting Sustainability Models to Take the Critical  
 Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to Scale” Program**

Government Representative	
1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Name of Government Agency	
4. Contact Details	
5. Location	
6. Date of KII	
7. Starting Time of KII	
8. Finishing Time of KII	

**BACKGROUND**

1. What is the primary role of your organization/agency in determining/implementing biodiversity conservation policy in your country/region?
2. What are some of the other key agencies which are involved in this role, especially in relevance to Protected Areas Management?
3. What are the current priorities of your government in terms of biodiversity conservation, especially as they relate to Protected Areas?
4. What are the major challenges to the development of policy aimed at biodiversity conservation, mainstreaming, and protected areas management? E.g. Govt. priority, community buy-in, funding support, etc.

**PROJECT DESIGN**

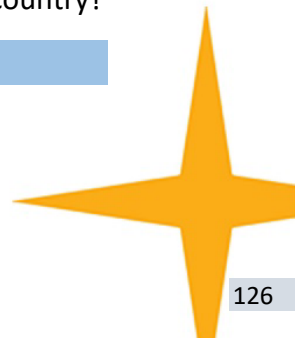


5. Has your organization been involved in the design and/or implementation of the CEPF project? If yes, please provide details, e.g. design process, different stakeholders.
6. If no, in your opinion, how did this lack of involvement affect your role with regards to project implementation?
7. To what extent is the current project aligned with the national and/or regional policy priorities of your government?
8. What gaps and limitations, if any, need to be filled to better align or improve the effectiveness of the project in the context of your country and/or region?

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

9. What role, if any, is played by your department in the implementation of the current project? E.g. participation in Steering Committee, policy support, provision of co-financing, etc.
  - a. Has your department been involved in the development of any national and/or regional long-term visions, regional resource mobilization strategies, and/or financing plans as part of the current project's implementation?
10. What challenges have you faced with implementation of the project, if any? E.g. funding transfers, access to field, lengthy approval processes, etc.
11. What measures have been/can be taken to overcome these challenges?
12. To what extent has your department been successful in developing and integrating any policies, programs, or plans addressing drivers of biodiversity loss in the context of your national and/or regional policy framework?
13. In your view, what is the current landscape of government partnership and/or collaboration with local and/or international CSOs in the domain of biodiversity conservation?
14. To what extent has this landscape changed or improved as a result of the CEPF project's implementation and support of local CSOs?
15. What are the remaining gaps and limitations that need to be addressed to further improve collaboration and partnership between CSOs and public sector stakeholders in your country?

## LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



16. What have been some of the other major Conservation and Protected Areas projects being implemented in your country/region over the past three years?
17. What have been the main opportunities and challenges faced by these projects?
18. What are your recommendations for the development of future biodiversity conservation and Protected Areas projects in your country/region?



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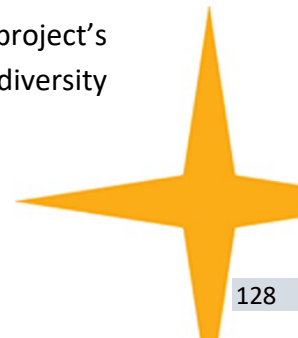
Private Sector Stakeholders	
1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Name of Organization	
4. Contact Details	
5. Location	
6. Date of KII	
7. Starting Time of KII	
8. Finishing Time of KII	

**BACKGROUND**

1. Please provide an overview of your business/organization.
2. What are the current priorities of your organization in terms of biodiversity mainstreaming and conservation as well as sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation?

**PROJECT INVOLVEMENT**

3. What has been the nature of your involvement in the current project?
4. In your view, what is the current landscape of partnership and collaboration between the private sector and the public sector and CSOs in the domain of biodiversity conservation in your area(s) of operation?
5. To what extent has this landscape changed or improved as a result of the CEPF project’s implementation and support of local CSOs, and greater efforts to mainstream biodiversity conservation in private sector practices?





6. What have been the major activities undertaken by your organization in collaboration with the current project?
7. What have been the benefits of your involvement and/or collaboration with CSOs and/or public sector entities as a result of this project?
8. What has been your organization's involvement in the development of innovative models for private sector conservation finance? What have been the outcomes of this engagement?
9. Have you made any changes in your business strategy, operations, and/or practices as a result of your involvement and/or collaboration with public sectors and/or CSOs? If yes, what biodiversity mainstreaming practices have been incorporated into your business?
10. What have been the major challenges faced over the course of your involvement in the current project?
11. What measures were taken to overcome those challenges? To what extent were these measures effective?

## LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

19. Have you been involved in any other major biodiversity conservation and mainstreaming projects of a similar nature?
20. How do you compare the abovementioned programs with the current project in terms of achieving the goals and objectives of your involvement and the support provided by CEPF?
21. What have been the major lessons learned as a result of your involvement in the current project?
22. What are your recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of biodiversity mainstreaming initiatives for private sector?
23. What is your outlook on the role of CSOs and private sector collaborating for strengthening biodiversity conservation over the medium and long-term?





CYNOSURE