

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Environmental Hot Spots Journalistic Monitoring

Implementation Partners for this Project: The trainings have been carried out in partnership with ICFJ

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): Aug 1, 2006-Jul 31, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): November, 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

Local governments, NGOs, journalists, and communities in general have limited access and awareness on environmental issues. Local governments lack experience in developing and implementing local sustainable development plans that target limited resources to the most serious community problems. Under relatively recent laws, local governments in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia have been given broad, new responsibilities for addressing economic, social, and environmental problems. This relatively new emphasis on local control recognizes that local governments and their citizens have the best understanding of local problems, issues, and needs. Unfortunately, local authorities in the South Caucasus have a relative lack of knowledge in effective self-governance at local level. Local authorities need assistance and experience on how to open up their decision-making process to reflect citizen input. On the converse, citizens have little experience with providing input into local government decisions.

The role of media (especially in the regions) in building environmental friendly civil society and practically assisting in solving local problems through providing the public and decision makers with information for informed participation in decision-making is crucial. All these conditioned great interest journalists, local decision-makers as well as other environmental stakeholders towards the Project.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *Enter project purpose from the Logical Framework worksheet of the approved project proposal.*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level: Capacity of environmental journalists built / developed and awareness / commitments of targeting decision-makers towards biodiversity conservation issues increased.	

1.1 At least 55 environmental journalists trained in the South Caucasus and correspondingly at least 11 best environmental stories / investigations and 22 articles concerned prepared and communicated by the end of the Project.	83 environmental journalists trained in the South Caucasus and correspondingly 18 best environmental stories / investigations and 34 articles concerned prepared and communicated by the end of the Project.
1.2 At least 33 key decision-makers in the South Caucasus are fully aware of existing severe environmental problems and involved in solving of these problems by the end of the Project.	36 key decision-makers in the South Caucasus are fully aware of existing severe environmental problems and involved in solving of these problems by the end of the Project.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

At the initial stage of project implementation the project team received a large amount of questionnaires filled out by the journalists. After analyzing the questionnaires the following picture was outlined: there had been a great demand in environmental information among journalists especially among those who lives and works in the regions. They all understand the importance of environmental information; however they either have no access to it, or have limited skills needed for obtaining required information. As a rule, trainings, seminars and other events led by outstanding national and international trainers are carried out in the capitals. The regional journalists usually are not aware about it, or have no financial resources to cover the participation costs. The trainings carried out within the framework of the project was attended by a larger number of journalists and other environmental stakeholders that it had been considered in the Project proposal and therefore the number of trained target group members and materials developed.

The project was focused on training of the journalists living and working in the regions of the three South Caucasus countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) representing regional printed media, radio and TV. Therefore the trainings (and media tours) were organized in 11 cities (not capitals) of these countries and materials developed by them have been published/broadcasted mainly in the local media. The articles (mainly in Russian) developed by these journalists can be found at:

<http://rec-caucasus.org/recc/index.php?f=12&su=12020010023&t=index>

Site oriented journalistic investigations took place in Poti, Georgia (regarding transportation of toxic substances through the port of Poti) and Alaverdi, Armenia (regarding operation of the Alaverdi metallurgical plant).

The main topics of the trainings were:

- Local environmental problems (delivered by the expert-environmentalist). In case of transboundary trainings the transboundary environmental problems were discussed as well.
- Environmental story writing skills (delivered by the media expert)
- Communication skills potential stakeholders as sources of environmental information (delivered by the media expert)
- Discussion and experience sharing
- Media tour for familiarization with local environmental problems and meeting local environmental stakeholders.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The project managed to involve more journalists, NGOs, representatives of local authorities and other concerned that it had been specified in the project proposal.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

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

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: Regional network of environmental journalists expanded and strengthened in the South Caucasus and effective information sharing / communication within the network supported in cooperation with ICFJ.	
1.1 <i>The strengthened regional network consists at least of 55 environmental journalists by the end of the Project.</i>	<i>The strengthened regional network consists of 65 environmental journalists by the end of the Project.</i>
1.2 <i>The most key problematic environmental problem (s) affecting the Caucasus Biodiversity communicated to the regional network members at least once in a month during the project implementation.</i>	<i>The most key problematic environmental problem (s) affecting the Caucasus Biodiversity communicated to the regional network members at least once in a month during the project implementation and after its completion</i>
Output 2: Key/severe environmental problems existing on the CEPF priority sites identified, investigated and communicated to key stakeholders and general public in the South Caucasus in cooperation with ICFJ.	
2.1 <i>At least 33 site-oriented case studies/journalistic investigations developed by the end of the project.</i>	<i>52 site-oriented case studies/journalistic investigations developed by the end of the project.</i>
2.2 <i>At least 20 articles published in central and local newspapers and at least 6 radio programmes broadcasted through local radio companies by the end of the project.</i>	<i>22 articles published in central and local newspapers and 9 radio programmes broadcasted through local radio companies by the end of the project.</i>
2.3 <i>At least 20 key local NGOs identified and involved in environmental journalistic investigations and decision-making process by the end of the project.</i>	<i>24 key local NGOs identified and involved in environmental journalistic investigations and decision-making process by the end of the project.</i>
Output 3: Capacity of environmental journalists, decision-makers and key NGOs built and developed in cooperation with ICFJ to ensure successful cooperation for further solving of identified environmental problems.	
3.1 <i>11 site-oriented / site-specific (3 sites from each participating countries and 2 transboundary sites) trainings for environmental journalists, NGOs representatives and key decision-makers conducted by the end of the project.</i>	<i>11 site-oriented / site-specific (3 sites from each participating countries and 2 transboundary sites) trainings for environmental journalists, NGOs representatives and key decision-makers conducted by the end of the project.</i>
3.2 <i>regional meetings for environmental journalists, NGOs representatives and key decision-makers conducted by the end of the project.</i>	<i>2 regional meetings for environmental journalists, NGOs representatives and key decision-makers conducted by the end of the project.</i>
Output 4: The best environmental stories developed, published and communicated to key stakeholders and wide public.	
4.1 <i>A special publication containing the best environmental stories developed and published by the end of the Project.</i>	<i>The best environmental stories are placed on the REC Caucasus web-site by the end of the project.</i>
4.2 <i>The publication is communicated to the key stakeholders (decision-makers, NGOs representatives, business sector) and wide public and placed on the REC Caucasus web-site by the end of the Project.</i>	<i>The best environmental stories communicated to the key stakeholders (decision-makers, NGOs representatives, business sector) and wide public through electronic networks and REC Caucasus web-site by the end of the project.</i>
Output 5: A new tool of electronic media developed.	
5.1 <i>An electronic map of the CEPF priority sites of the Caucasus, containing narrative and graphical information about their biological and landscape</i>	<i>An electronic map of the CEPF priority sites of the Caucasus, containing narrative and graphical information about their biological and landscape</i>

<i>diversity, existing problems and contacts of the key stakeholders (i.e. local NGOs, local mass-media representatives, business sector, decision-makers), developed by the end of the Project.</i>	<i>diversity, existing problems and contacts of the key stakeholders (i.e. local NGOs, local mass-media representatives, business sector, decision-makers), developed by the end of the Project.</i>
<i>5.2 The electronic map placed on the REC Caucasus web-site by the end of the Project.</i>	<i>The electronic map placed on the REC Caucasus web-site by the end of the Project. Please visit http://rec-caucasus.org/map.php The information placed on the map will be constantly updated based on the materials provided by the project participants.</i>

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

The main purpose of the project was to initiate a dialogue and shape partnerships among journalists, local authorities, NGOs, businesses, and other environmental stakeholders in biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development issues. 11 trainings (covering the three South Caucasus countries) with participation of local journalists and local environmental players were oriented at capacity building of journalists and improvement of communication between environmental stakeholders and other concerned. The project helped to develop commitments of decision-makers towards biodiversity conservation issues through increased level of environmental journalism and public participation in environmental decision-making.

Capacity of environmental journalists, decision-makers and key NGOs has been built and developed to ensure successful cooperation for further solving of identified local environmental problems through trainings and continuous information support provided by the project.

The project established and expanded the network of environmental journalists of the South Caucasus countries. The project provided information and expert support to journalists interested in development of environmental stories. Environmental stories developed by the journalists – project participants – have been communicated through REC Caucasus mailing lists thus contributing to information and experience exchange and strengthening transboundary and regional cooperation in the South Caucasus.

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

The Output 4: The best environmental stories developed, published and communicated to key stakeholders and wide public has been partially realized. According to the Project proposal it was planned to publish the best articles developed within the framework of the project in a special publication. However due to certain problems in terms of implementation of the project in Azerbaijan, REC Caucasus has requested extension on the project without making changes in the operational budget several times. As a result the articles prepared during media tours in Georgia and Armenia lost their urgency. Moreover, the budget initially allocated for the activities in Azerbaijan did not allow for implementation of planned actions due to rising in prices since 2006. Therefore it was decided not to publish a book, place the developed articles on the REC Caucasus web-site and use its resources for implementation of activities in Azerbaijan.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

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

During the project design lessons learned from the TACIS funded project Media and Public Participation Techniques implemented by REC Caucasus in 2004 had been considered. Within the framework of the Information Programme REC Caucasus conducted a number of consultations with local NGOs, government, media and business representatives as a result of which the need if establishment of an effective cooperation among different environmental stakeholders for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection has been revealed.

The project was developed under the umbrella of the “environmental awareness raising” motto through promotion of more active and competent interventions of media outlets, exchange of information, providing practical tool kits, establishing links between representatives of governmental, nongovernmental and international organisations, experts, students, mass media and general public.

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

The Project has been successfully completed despite of interruptions in its implementation.

Participation of wide range of experts, journalists, environmental NGOs, representatives of local authorities and consideration of their recommendations and comments during the Project implementation and regarding its outputs contributed to the success of the Project and made it truly participatory.

The project not only raised the environmental awareness of target groups, but also provided a forum for environmental stakeholders to discuss the local biodiversity and general environmental issues and establish partnerships for better conservation of local biodiversity and protection of the local environment.

VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

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

There have been no other sources from other donors. The required additional costs (\$20,000) have been covered by REC Caucasus (\$14,900.00 for salaries and \$ 5,100.00 for rent).

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

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

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

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

The journalists – participants of the Project and the implemented organization – REC Caucasus are developing project ideas based on gained experience and lessons learned. The network of journalists committed to continue communication and experience sharing after completion of the Project.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on experience gained during implementation of the Project we would like to propose a recommendation to funding organisations: support local initiatives developed with participation of local players. This will increase the sense of ownership of local communities towards the local biodiversity. The donors' support should be twofold: 1. in order to enable local communities to identify and prioritize local conservation issues, more projects oriented on their awareness raising shall be undertaken; 2. local initiatives directed on biodiversity conservation shall be supported.

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

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