CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name:

Ilam Cooperation Council (ICC)

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):

Strengthening Civil Society for Biodiversity Conservation Support Project

Implementation Partners for this Project: NA

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): April 1, 2007 - March 31, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): 9th June, 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

This project was implemented since April 2007 for two years with the overall goal of maintaining the ecological integrity of the Kangchenjunga-Singalila Complex (KSC). The objective of the project was to conserve floral and faunal diversity through capable civil society networks and alliances. This project is successful to raise awareness, build capacity and strengthen institutional capacity of local stakeholders for biodiversity conservation in project area.

Community forests (CFs) developed improved forest management operation plan by incorporating separate chapter for biodiversity conservation including floral and faunal inventories, status of key species, conservation strategy, programs and five years conservation action plan. 5 community forests initiated improved forest management practices targeting the conservation key species such as Red Panda, Himalayan Thar, *Michellia* species, *Taxus wallichiana*, and *Rhododedron* species in their community forests. Delineation of conservation zones, restoration and conservation of wetlands, monitoring of key species and afforestation are few examples. Ilam Cooperation Council (ICC) provided small financial supports for increased community participation in such activities.

Survey of Red Panda was carried out in 2 community forests in partnership with Ilam cooperation council (ICC), Red Panda Network (RPN) and Namsaling Community Development Center (NCDC) to document its status. Permanent transacts were fixed in two community forests for community based monitoring. 3 individual Red Panda were reported during monitoring. 2 community forests have been monitoring Red Panda mobilizing 4 trained forest guardians. Similarly, 1 community forest has initiated the community based monitoring of Himalayan Thar mobilizing 1 forest guardian. A pair of Himalayan Thar was reported during monitoring in the area. 5 community forests have initiated the monitoring of key flora (*Michellia* species, *Texus wallichiana*, *Rhododedron*, *Swertia chirayita*) and fauna (Red Panda, Himalayan Thar) in their community forests guided by their operation plan.

Village development committee (VDC) levels Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committees (BCCCs) have been formed and have initiated the advocacy with local governing bodies. As result Village Development Committees (VDCs) and local organization incorporated the issues of biodiversity conservation in annual plan and budget.

11 community forests were supported to demarcate their boundary along with the floral and faunal inventory. This has contributed to reduce unsustainable harvesting of forest resources, encroachment of community forests and conflict among community forests and adjoining communities. Similarly, grazing management plan has been developed in two sites of the project area in participation with local livestock herders. The key strategies are rotational, and controlled grazing, stall feeding and fencing of intensively grazing sites.

The institutional capacity of Ilam Cooperation Council (ICC) has been strengthened. Separate unit of biodiversity conservation namely Natural Resources, Environment and Agriculture Development (NEAD) with six skilled human resources has been established. ICC has developed separate conservation strategy with long term commitment to work on biodiversity in the area.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose:

To conserve the biodiversity of Kangchenjunga Singalila Complex through capable civil society networks and alliances

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion		
Purpose-level:			

1. 4 Community Forest User Groups in Kangchenjunga Singhalila Complex will initiate forest management that supports key species conservation by the end of the project.	 5 Community Forests initiated improved forest managment practices in their area targeting the key species conservation such as Red Panda, Himalayan Thar, Michellia species, Taxus wallichiana, Rhododendron species etc. in their forest area. ICC has provided small financial support to 6 community forests to encourage community participation in such conservation activities. Delineation of conservation zones (focusing key species), restoration and conservation of wetland, monitoring of illegal trafficking, afforestation of indigenous species, etc are few examples of community initiatives.
2. Status of at least 2 key species well documented and conserved in community forests by the end of the project.	 Survey of Red Panda was carried out in two community forests (Hangetham and Chiyatar) in partnership with ICC, RPN and NCDC to document its status. Permanent transacts were fixed in 2 CFs for community based monitoring 4 forest guardians were selected and trained for monitoring. 3 individual Red Pandas were reported during monitoring. Similarly, community based monitoring of Himalayan Thar in 1 community forest was initiated. A pair of Himalayan Thar in that community forest was reported during monitoring by forest guardian. During the time of CF operation plan preparation, community based ranking for floral and faunal species to be conserved was done.
3. Investment for biodiversity conservation initiated by at least 2 local governing bodies through establishment of strategic alliances by the end of the project	 Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committee (BCCC) has been formed at village development committee (VDCs) level and continuously making efforts to incorporate biodiversity conservation in the plan and budget of local governing bodies. As a result, each village development committees (VDCs) of project area has expressed the commitment to address the issues of conservation in annual plan and budget. Two VDCs have provided office space for Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committee (BCCC). Two VDCs have financially contributed in forest management and biodiversity

	 conservation. Besides this, Uppermai Hydro Power Company has been provided the support of more than \$ 0.5 million for forest management in 2 villages.
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Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

The project has been successful to raise awareness among local communities (community forest users, social intermediaries, school teachers, students, farmers, livestock herders, local bodies etc.) for conservation of flora (*Taxus sp., Michellia sp., Rhododedron sp.*) and fauna (Red Panda, Himalayan Thar,) by making them more awakened. Community forests have initiated improved forest management practices guided by the operation plan. As a result community based initiatives for conservation of such flora and fauna have been started at local level. Delineation of conservation zones (focusing key species), restoration and conservation of wetland, monitoring of illegal trafficking, afforestation of indigenous species, etc are few examples of community initiatives.

Permanent transacts were fixed in two community forests for community based monitoring of Red Panda. 2 community forests have been monitoring Red Panda mobilizing 4 trained forest guardians. Similarly, 1 community forest has initiated the community based monitoring of Himalayan Thar mobilizing 1 forest guardian. 5 community forests have initiated the monitoring of key flora (*Michellia* species, *Texus wallichiana*, *Rhododedron*, *Swertia chirayita*) and fauna (Red Panda, Himalayan Thar) in their community forests guided by their operation plan.

Capacity of community forest users' and local stakeholders for conservation friendly forest management, advocacy for conservation and institutional strengthening of local level stakeholders has been increased. Village development committee (VDC) levels Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committees (BCCCs) have been formed and have initiated the advocacy with local governing bodies. As result Village Development Committees (VDCs) and local organization incorporated the issues of biodiversity conservation in annual plan and budget.

ICC has developed its long term commitment for biodiversity conservation in the area. As a local organization, ICC has a long term responsibility to work with community even though the termination of project. Biodiversity conservation is not a single snap even that should have long term commitment, needs behavioral changes, and have as broader movement of conservation.

As a result of the project efforts, the issue of biodiversity conservation has been established at district level. District Development Committee (DDC) has allocated \$ 0.1 million of budget for documentation of wetlands (natural ponds, lakes, flora and fauna) and development of its conservation strategy in the district. Similarly, biodiversity conservation has been incorporated in District Development Committee's annual plan.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

There were not any unexpected impacts from the project implemented in the area.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs:

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion		
Output 1: Community Forest User Groups of key sites (Sandakphu-Mai watershed areas) in Kangchenjunga-Singhalila complex incorporate biodiversity conservation values in forest managment			
1.1. 11 Community Forest User Groups have Forest Operational Plans that incorporate floral and faunal inventories, conservation strategies and conservation timeline for key species by year 2.	 11 community forests completed the boundary demarcation and floral and faunal inventory. 11 community forests have developed/improved their forest operation plan including biodiversity conservation as separate chapter. 1620 hectares of community forests were under improved forest management practices guided by the operation plan. Newly developed operation plans have included the floral and faunal inventories, local ranking based on the user's participation, conservation objectives, strategies, and 5 years action plan 		
1.2. Atleast 2 Community Forest User Groups initiate monitoring of key floral and or faunal species in their community forests by year 2	 5 community forests have initiated the monitoring of key flora (<i>Michellia</i> species, <i>Texus wallichiana</i>, <i>Rhododedron</i>, <i>Swertia chirayita</i>) and fauna (Red Panda and Himalayan Thar) using simple community based monitoring. The monitoring indicators include presence, numbers, movements, habitat conditions of aforementioned species. 		
Output 2: Capacity of Community Forest User Groups, social intermediaries, schools, livestock herders, farmers and local conservation activists strengthened to advocate for value of biodiversity conservation in unprotected forests in project sites			
2.1. 1 capacity building program for target groups/beneficiaries developed by year 1 of the project	 1 capacity building packages for village level stakeholders developed. Capacity building packages include group management, biodiversity group formation and operation, advocacy for conservation, and fund raising at local level. Working guidelines of village development committee level conservation Committee was developed. 4 Biodiversity conservation Coordination Committee (BCCC) in 4 village development committee were trained to advocate the biodiversity conservation with local governing bodies and district level institutions. Similarly, 4 Eco Clubs in 4 schools were formed and oriented in importance of biodiversity conservation. 		

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	4 Eco Clubs have engaged in awareness rising at school level organizing speech contest, wall magazine publication, and quiz contest on conservation.
2.2. 2 Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committee initiated advocacy for inclusion of biodiversity conservation component in Community Forestry Guidelines at the district level by year 2.	 4 Biodiversity conservation Coordination Committee (BCCC) in 4 VDCs were formed and capacited in advocacy, coordination, networking and fundraising for biodiversity conservation at village level. They have been doing advocacy, coordination and networking for conservation now. Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committees (BCCCs) have become successful to incorporate conservation issues in annual plan and budget of local governing bodies.
Output 3: Threats to forests from encroachment, unsustainable harvesting of forest resources and conservation unfriendly practices like intensive grazing decreased	
3.1. 11community forests have clearly demarcated boundaries to reduce encroachment by year 2	 11 community forests demarcated their forest boundaries along with the floral and faunal inventory taking and Operation plan preparation This has reduced the encroachment of community forest and also reduced conflict between community forests and adjoining communities.
3.2. 2 Community forest user groups set up monitoring practices to minimize/reduce unsustainable harvesting of key forest resources by Year 2	 5 Community forests initiated to monitor key forest resources key flora (<i>Michellia</i> species, <i>Texus wallichiana</i>, <i>Rhododedron</i>, <i>Swertia chirayita</i>) and fauna (Red Panda and Himalayan Thar) using simple community based monitoring. This has contributed to minimize the unsustainable harvesting and damaging the forest resources.
3.3. 2 community forest user groups having intense grazing pressure develop a grazing management plans by year 2	 Grazing management strategic plan in two intensively grazing sites was developed with the participation of livestock herders of the area. The alternative strategies for grazing management are rotational & controlled grazing, stall feeding, and fencing). Livestock herders have already initiated the alternative practices in intensively grazing area.
Output 4: The institutional capacity of Ilam cooperation Council strengthened for better documentation, planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation of biodiversity conservation	

4.1. Seperate unit of biodiversity conservation with skilled human resource established by year 1	ICC established its Natural Resources Environment and Agriculture Development (NEAD) unit. ICC has hired six professional staffs for biodiversity conservation.
4.2. Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan developed by the organization by Yr 2	 ICC has developed separate conservation strategy with long term commitment in biodiversity conservation in the area. The strategy includes vision, mission, long term goal, objectives, and strategies of organization in biodiversity conservation.

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

Community forests initiated improved forest management practices targeting the conservation key species such as Red Panda, Himalayan Thar, *Michellia* species, *Taxus wallichiana*, and *Rhododedron* species in their community forests based on the forest operation plan. Delineation of conservation zones, restoration and conservation of 3 wetlands, monitoring of key species and afforestation are few examples. Ilam Cooperation Council (ICC) provided small financial supports for increased community participation in such activities. Capacity of community forests in conservation friendly forest management has been strengthened.

Survey of Red Panda was carried out in 2 community forests in partnership with Ilam cooperation council (ICC), Red Panda Network (RPN) and Namsaling Community Development Center (NCDC) that gave present status of Red Panda. Permanent transacts were fixed in two community forests for community based monitoring. 3 individual Red Panda were reported during monitoring. 2 community forests have been monitoring Red Panda mobilizing 4 trained forest guardians.

Similarly, 1 community forest has initiated the community based monitoring of Himalayan Thar mobilizing 1 forest guardian. A pair of Himalayan Thar was reported during monitoring in the area. 5 community forests have initiated the monitoring of key flora (*Michellia* species, *Texus wallichiana*, *Rhododedron*, *Swertia chirayita*) and fauna (Red Panda, Himalayan Thar) in their community forests guided by their operation plan.

11 community forests were demarcated their boundary along with the floral and faunal inventory. This has contributed to reduce unsustainable harvesting of forest resources, encroachment of community forests and conflict among community forests and adjoining communities. Similarly, grazing management plan has been developed in two sites of the project area in participation with local livestock herders. The key strategies are rotational, and controlled grazing, stall feeding and fencing of intensively grazing sites.

Village development committee (VDC) levels Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committees (BCCCs) have been formed and have initiated the advocacy with local governing bodies. Village Development Committees (VDCs) and local organization incorporated the issues of biodiversity conservation in annual plan and budget because of the advocacy done by the committee.

The institutional capacity of Ilam Cooperation Council (ICC) has been strengthened. Separate unit of biodiversity conservation namely Natural Resources, Environment and Agriculture Development (NEAD) with six skilled human resources has been established. ICC has developed separate conservation strategy with long term commitment to work on biodiversity in the area. This document will guide ICC to engaged in the biodiversity conservation programs in the area in future.

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

Documentation of status of clouded Leopard and Asiatic Black Bear could not be done due to short time and project limitation that was aimed by this project initially as conservation outcome.

Two new community forests were formed in the f project area that was not mentioned in project output and activities.

3 wetlands in the project area were conserved that was not mentioned in project output and activities. These will support conservation of habitats in the area.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

More of it, policy reform and enforcement is major aspect to ensure conservation friendly forest management in context of Nepal. In absence of such conservation friendly management provisions, the project tried to convince local communities (CF users, farmers, social intermediaries, livestock herders and local governing bodies) by awareness and awaking campaign.

Generally local communities have an interest of getting direct benefits from their resources including forest before its conservation. It is difficult job to ensure participation of such communities. So the conservation activities are necessary to move along with the livelihood improvement to meet the multiple needs of the local communities. Locally developed and / or indigenous knowledge system and local practices should be considered to internalize the conservation activities by local communities. Integrated types of conservation project will be more effective in the context of the project area.

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.

The lessons learned during the implementation of the project are as following;

- It is important to build ownership and popular support of local people for long term involvement for biodiversity conservation at local level. So it needs wider dissemination of information about the needs and benefits of the conservation among local communities.
- Impact and outcomes of biodiversity conservation are long-term conservation movement rather than short-term efforts. So it is necessary to devote long term commitment and involvement to achieve it long term goal and outcomes.
- Acknowledging local knowledge and ways of conservation -promotion of local and traditional practices. It motivates local communities to participate in conservation activities.
- Effective coordination -important to meet the multiple needs of the communities that provide the incentive to communities for conservation activities.
- Awareness on biodiversity conservation at school level is key aspect to disseminate information.
- Developing capacity of local stakeholders makes easier to implement conservation program at local level. Local resource persons work as key actor for the conservation activities.
- Community-based Conservation Strategic Plan (CCSP) and Community Action Plan (CAP) through Biodiversity Conservation Coordination Committee (BCCC) can be best option for the conservation friendly forest management. However, current forest policies should be amended to adopt this provision.

• The approach of the conservation project is necessary to be integrated to meet the multiple needs of communities.

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

The project was designed on the ground of short assessment of the area and past experiences of the organization. It would be better to meet particular needs and priority through detailed assessment of project area before project designing. Some revisions even after initiation of project implementation were done to make activities more effective. On the basis of lessons learned from this project, participatory need assessment of the project area was realized necessary to ensure wider participation and internalization of the local people.

The key steps of process of the future project may be preliminary assessment, project design, rapport building, awareness/sensitization, awaking, empowerment and capacity building, mobilization and demonstration, practices & adoption, changes, effect, & impact, sustainability of efforts of biodiversity conservation and clear exit strategy. At initial phase the role of ICC will be broader and gradually narrowing while the role community is increasing with the time of implementation.

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

There were several challenges during project executions such as negative impacts and poor management of CF due to decade-long conflict of Nepal, boundary demarcation of community forests, encroachment of community forests, and over-exploitation of forest resources are key issues to address for project implementation, indifference of key stakeholders in some parts of the trans-border area, and lack of conservation friendly government policies and active involvement of stakeholders. However, the following strengths of ICC made this project successful:

- Past experiences, goodwill and trust of Ilam Cooperation Ccouncil (ICC) among communities of the project area.
- Well coordination among district and local level stakeholders.
- Long term commitment for conservation and involvement in other community development activities in project area.
- Transparent working approach at district and field level
- Use of participatory and social mobilization approach for project implementation.
- Team spirit of skilled human resources with well understanding of the project area and contents.

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.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Date Received	Notes
CEPF	С	\$29606	1st Feb, 2009	Traditional Land Management and its impact on Biodiversity conservation in Kanchenjunga Singalila complex, Nepal.
Community Managed Irrigated Agriculture	В	\$3000.0	June, 2007	Social Mobilization Support for Community Managed Irrigation Project Construction in

Support Project				Jamuna and Puwamajhuwa,
(CMIASP)				llam
The Netherland	В	\$3000.00	March 2009	Production Level Activities of
Development				Large Cardamom in Ilam
Organization				
(SNV) Nepal				
District	В	\$1500	March 2009	Documentation of Wetlands in
Development				llam District.
Committee (DDC)				
llam				

^{*}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 project has developed its exit strategy to continue its efforts in the project area by forming and building capacity of village level biodiversity conservation coordination committee (BCCC) and School level Eco Club. They will continue the awareness raising, advocacy and institutional lobbying for conservation at village development committee (VDC) level. Small funds will be mobilized by local governing bodies. Similarly, community forest groups has been developed their operation plan and annual work plan incorporating the conservation issues that ensure continuation of the biodiversity conservation activities in the future. ICC has also developed its long term conservation strategy with the commitment of regular involvement in strengthening the BCCC and Eco Clubs in VDC level. As a local based organization, ICC has a responsibility to support them even after phasing out the project. Local Resource Persons (LRPs) for operation plan implementation, monitoring and awareness raising will be another mechanism to sustain the project outcomes.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project has successfully completed that will be milestone for conservation awareness, community participation and institutional development in the field of biodiversity conservation. Some important initiation such as conservation of key species (flora; *Taxus wallichina, Michellia species, Rhododedron species, Swertia chirata* and fauna; Red Panda, Himalayan Thar) has been taken during project implementation. Community based restoration and conservation of wetland (Hangetham, Mabu, Maimajhuwa) will another achievement that will link biodiversity conservation with ecotourism development. For the first time, CF operation plan have been developed incorporating biodiversity conservation issues as separate chapter in the plan and approved by the district forest office. These plans will work s reference for other community forest. The capacity of local level institutions, social leaders, and key persons has been increased to involve in the conservation activities.

However, total conservation outcomes can not be achieved in this short period. It needs long term commitment, involvements, investment and needs behavioral changes of the people. Conservation is multifaceted movement that should be closely linked with the livelihood of the participants. They project as it limitation could not address these multiple needs of the people at short time duration. However, the project is able to raise awareness, build capacity and institutional development in the area.

The following are the recommendations to work in the project area that will contribute to achieve long term project goal and its impact;

- Ecotourism programs (community based tourism) as community incentive for biodiversity conservation.
- Restoration of Natural lakes/ponds and wetland in project area which are the key habitat
 of flora and fauna.
- Programs directly improving their livelihood (NTFPs, MAPs, agriculture and other IGAs promotion,) can contribute to achieve overall goal of the conservation.
- Developing small funds for community based project on conservation for increased community participation.
- Other community incentives for community contributions (small infrastructure, alternative and renewable energy promotion, source protection, schools, poverty alleviation etc.
- Some specific programs such as Key fauna (Red Panda, Himalayan Thar, Pengolin, Leopard Cat, Flying Squirrel etc.) and flora (*Taxus wallichina, Michellia species, Rhododedron species, Swertia chirata*, medicinal plants, etc.) conservation in the area
- Strengthening of VDCs, BCCCs, Eco Clubs and CFs in governance for conservation can contribute to long term involvement of local stakeholders in conservation activities.
- Conservation of Biodiversity in private forest and land providing incentives will also contribute to achieve overall goal of the biodiversity conservation in Kanchenjunga Singalila Complex (KSC).

ICC has making efforts to raise funds in order to achieve these opportunities through her side. Some projects have been developed in the past and some are under development process. Two projects were leveraged as matching support for local communities. ICC is making efforts to raise fund through these projects and concept among donors in the future. Some of them are;

- Sustainable Management of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs): Alternative Livelihood Opportunities of High Altitude Communities (Proposal Developed)
- Eco-Restoration For Sustainable Development In Kanchenjungha-Singhlila Landscape Complex, Ilam, Nepal (Proposal Developed)
- Promotion of Bamboo Based Enterprises for Sustainable Income Generation and Environment Conservation in Eastern Hill of Nepal (Proposal Developed)
- Can conservation bring benefits to local communities- Reconciling conservation with sustainable livelihoods in Kangchenjunga Singalila Complex of Eastern Nepal (Proposal developed)
- Traditional Land Management and its Impact on conservation in Kanchenjunga Singalila Complex in Nepal supported by CEPF is now implementing.
- Production Level Activities for Large Cardamom for CF users supported by SNV/Nepal has been implementing now.
- Conservation of Natural Ponds in Key Hotspots of Biological Corridor in Kanchenjunga Singalila Complex (KSC), Nepal (development process)
- Strengthening of VDCs, BCCCs, Eco Clubs and CFs in governance related projects
- Ecotourism programs (community based tourism) promotion
- Restoration of Natural lakes/ponds and wetland- ICC is now documenting such wetland
 in llam district with its own resources. ICC is developing the proposal for the conservation
 of such wetlands in the selected area of the district.
- Programs directly improving their livelihood (NTFPs, MAPs, agriculture and other IGAs promotion.)

ICC has developed is strategic plan identifying key areas of works. Mobilization of human resources, renting equipments, and project based fundraising strategies will be followed. In future, ICC will continuously involve in biodiversity conservation the area.

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.

Please include your full contact details below:

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