

## CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Movement for Ecological Learning and Community Action (MELCA) - Ethiopia
<b>Project Title:</b>	Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve: Strengthening the Management System and Working with Nearby Communities on Bio-Cultural Learning and Livelihoods Development
<b>Date of Report:</b>	
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Befekadu Refera e-mail : - befekadurefera@yahoo.com +251-11-550-71-72 or +251-911-476514

**CEPF Region:** Eastern Afromontane

**Strategic Direction:** 2. Improve Management and Protection of KBAs

**Grant Amount:** \$121,797

**Project Dates:** June 1, 2013-November 30, 2014

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

### Conservation Impacts

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

*Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.*

**Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):**

Sheka Forest biosphere reserve in Key Biodiversity Area ETH69 is sustainably conserved and adored by the young generation and from which the community gets reasonable benefit from non-timber forest products

**Actual Progress toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:**

The Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve management plan prepared and four rounds discussions have been made with all relevant institutions and all important suggestions and input were incorporated in the document. The management plan also included the management structure of the Sheka forest biosphere reserve. After detail discussion has been made on the management structure (from zone up to grass root level (village) endorsed by respective government offices and become functional. All core zones demarcated on the ground and sign posts are fixed with active participation of local communities and relevant institutes.

From the local community members, peoples who are poor women and unemployed youth were selected and trained by capacity building trainings. After training, they have formed cooperatives. The cooperatives are organized by non-timber forest products (NTFP) like bee keeping, spice production, home gardening and animal fattening.

Regarding intergenerational learning, it was able to transfer culture and biodiversity related knowledge from elder to younger generation by SEGNI programme. The programme was conducted inside deep forest. It participate 24 young students (equal male and female) per each round. Elders who have rich knowledge and experience both in culture and biodiversity knowledge were selected and are serving as a resource person for intergenerational learning from elder to younger generation.

**Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):**

I - The Sheka forest biosphere reserve is effectively managed through the design and implementation of a conservation and management plan with active participation of the local community and all stakeholders and by setting up an inclusive management structure by the end of March 2014.

II - The 238,750Ha of land of the Sheka Forest Biosphere reserve are demarcated on the ground and the 55,255Ha of the 7 core areas monitored by a community-based information system by December 2013

III - The local governors and local community will be aware of the significance of their natural resource both nationally and globally and will stop leasing the land for non-environmentally friendly investments and will focus on maximizing the utilization of non-timber forest products

IV - 300 school students selected from 12 schools will get intergenerational learning experiences from elder to younger generation on traditional ecological knowledge and become eco-advocates of the Sheka forest and convey the message to at least to 3000 school community for November 2014.

V - 150 members of Menja marginalized community and 100 unemployed youth and women whose livelihood is directly dependant on the forest will get sustainable and reasonable benefit from non-timber forest products and the livelihood of project members will be improved by 30 % before the end of November 2014.

**Actual Progress toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:**

I. The Sheka forest management plan prepared and discussed with all relevant government institutes, peoples representatives, and local governors for four rounds. By now it is waiting the final endorsement by the Sheka zone house of people's representatives. The management plan is for publication in Local Amharic and in English languages. In addition to this, the management structure is already approved and become functional.

II. Using GPS 55,255Ha plot of land is demarcated and each core zone is clearly identified on the ground. In addition to these, in Masha district at 27, in Anderacha district at 34 and at Yeki district at 31 places sign posts are fixed and are serving to easily identify the core zones and protect the illegal settlements and all prohibited activities inside the core zones. Moreover, 40 Community informants (rangers) and 4 focal persons selected and trained on how to regulate illegal activities inside and surrounding core zones. Information exchange system has been established among local informants and focal persons at woreda and zone level.

III. During the project intervention, major emphasis has been given for environmental awareness creation from grass root up to policy and decision makers' level. It mainly focused in awareness creation about the significance of conserving Sheka Forest biosphere reserve both at global and national level. As a result, it was possible to regulate non-environmentally friendly investments around Sheka forest biosphere reserve and control illegal forest users and some cases have got court decision and some illegal forest users detain in jail because of their illegal activities. In relation to this, capacity building trainings, supply necessary equipments and providing start up money has been done for cooperatives that are organized in non-timber forest products

(beekeeping, wild spices collection and propagation, home gardening and cattle fattening) as an alternatives means of getting money from non-timber forest products.

IV. By 12 rounds environmental education program (social empowerment through group and nature interaction (SEGNI), it was able to train 300 students in the form of intergenerational learning. During the process, 4 elders were selected based on the merit of knowing their culture and biodiversity very deeply. The four elders were very instrumental to teach the young generation both about their culture and biodiversity inside intact forest. By SEGNI programme the participants were expected to emotionally attach themselves with culture, nature and self. The day time was allocated to know about their biodiversity (nature) and emotionally with nature and have solitary time to ask about them. Whereas, the night time was allocated purely for culture by sitting around camp fire and hearing about stories, proverbs, riddles, says etc. elders were active in transferring indigenous knowledge in African customary way. The process took 5 days per each round and the participants after their participation they become eco-advocates and contribute for conservation of their culture and biodiversity. Each ecoadvocate in average aware of ten people about the significance of conserving the Sheka Forest biosphere reserve and interlinked culture and knowledge it was able to aware more than 3000 peoples during the project implementation period.

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

**Hectares Protected:** 238, 750 Hectare plots of land

**Species Conserved:** 300 higher plants, 50 mammals, 200 birds, and 20 Amphibian species,

**Corridors Created:** Not yet known.

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

The project is implemented successfully as per plan. During implementation what we faced as a challenge was getting governmental officials as project schedule. There was high government office staffs turn over. After you trained experts and officials it was negative when the trained expert or officials lost his position. As a result, it was difficult to accomplish the project as per plan of action. In addition to this, because of turn over of staff it was necessary to discuss on the draft management plan again and again and it took more effort and time.

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

Yes, because of high turn over of the government officials, it make very difficult to get the final endorsement/ endorsement to publish the Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve management plan and disseminate for all stakeholders on time.

## Project Components

**Project Components:** *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

**Component 1 Planned:** Management plan for Sheka biosphere reserve developed, agreed upon by consulted key stakeholders, endorsed by zonal administration and accessible for all (Short term Impact I)

**Component 1 Actual at Completion:**

Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve management plan produced and consulted at zone, woreda, and village level. Based on the comment given by stakeholders and all the necessary suggestions incorporated in the document and presented for the second round discussion. Then

it gets the necessary input and get acceptance by all stakeholders. Next to this the draft management plans also discussed at Sheka zone cabinet and at Sheka zone the house of people representatives' level. At both meetings, important suggestions have been given and enrich the document. Then get approval by the Sheka zone cabinet first and then by parliament standing committees. Finally, the document is presented to Sheka zone parliament annual meeting for endorsement. However, some of the parliament members are new for the case because they are working in Federal government offices and were not participated on the process. These few member of the parliament demand some more time to read before the endorsement of the document. As a result, the document is waiting some more months for the final endorsement for publication because the meeting will be done once per year.

**Component 2 Planned:** an inclusive management structure is established and running for the biosphere reserve (STI I)

**Component 2 Actual at Completion:**

The management structure from Sheka zone up to grass root level structured based on the suggestion of all stakeholders. At zone level there is management board that includes wider stakeholders (24 members). It meets once or twice per year. Under the management board, there Zone level Management unit. This unit is established from 5 important organizations and it is functional unit that follows the day to day activities of the biosphere reserve. The Zonal management unit (MU) plays the leading role, with final decisions. It shall establish its own founding charter, in which the goals, duties, responsibilities and organizational details are clearly defined.

The zonal MU monitors and implements the Management Plan through:

- Inform all stakeholders about the progress made continuously;
- Ensuring that activities carried out in the biosphere reserve are conforming with the zonation requirements, and in case of illegal activities, prosecuting them;
- Coordinate and supervise overall planned activities of the biosphere reserve
- Find solutions for problems and conflicts that might occur between stakeholders

Active and similar structure is also established at woreda level. In addition to this, at zone and woreda level focal institution (natural resource department) is also assigned for day to day activities. The focal instituted focal person is assigned to communicate with community informants at kebele level and update the condition for woreda level management unit or to management board as deemed necessary.

The Woreda and Kebele focal persons are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the local communities are aware of the plan;
- Ensuring that their administration is aware of the plan and implement the relevant actions;
- Ensuring that the uses are in accordance with the management plan;
- Inform local communities about the penalty in case of any rule breaking;
- Gathering data on achievements and eventual issues to inform the Woreda focal person and zonal MU for the Kebele and Woreda focal person respectively;
- Implementing the Management Plan's actions in collaboration with the Woreda focal person and zonal MU for the Kebele and Woreda focal person respectively;
- Coordinate and supervise overall planned activities in their area.

Based on the outlined role and responsibilities, the management structure is become functional and operating very well from zone up to the grass root level.

**Component 3 Planned:** The zonation of the biosphere is fully established through demarcation of the three management zones and monitored through a participatory monitoring system for the 55.255Ha of core areas (STI II).

**Component 3 Actual at Completion:**

Demarcation of the Sheka forest biosphere reserve on the ground has been done to have a clear boundary of the core; buffer and transitional zones. Using GPS 55,255Ha plot of land is demarcated on the ground and each core zone is clearly identified on the ground. In addition to these, in Masha district at 27 places, in Anderacha district at 34 and in Yeki district at 31 places sign posts are fixed and are serving for easy identification of the core zones and protect the illegal settlements and all other prohibited activities inside the core zones. Moreover, 40 Community informants (rangers) and 4 focal persons selected and trained on how to regulate illegal activities inside and surrounding core zones. Information exchange system has been established among local informants and focal persons at woreda and zone level.

**Component 4 Planned:** Institutional capacity and environmental awareness have increased among 340 officials for better law enforcement and community-oriented management in Sheka (STI III)

**Component 4 Actual at Completion:** Legal workshops focusing on environmental laws have been given with emphasis on national and international legal frame works. Similar capacity building trainings has been organized for local communities over their culture and natural resources conservation and legal situation. The legal workshops were aimed at building the capacity of the local governors and community members for effective enforcement of environmental and cultural laws in the area.

MELCA have also engaged in livelihood improvement or income generating activities (IGA) for disadvantaged or marginalized groups, like poor women, unemployed youth and Menja minority group. All these program areas of MELCA are linked, in one or another way, to culture-oriented conservation of bio-diversity. In addition to its various interventions, to which bio-cultural conservation is the center, MELCA has been endeavoring to maximize its effort in disseminating information regarding its approaches and successes in the areas of its engagements, to its partners, stakeholders and other interested parties.

**Component 5 Planned:** Capacity to carry out community projects on bio-cultural diversity and constituency have increased in the two cultural leaders associations through improved and sustained quality of internal management, membership expansion and training (STI III).

**Component 5 Actual at Completion:**

Series of capacity building trainings and consultative meetings have been organized and provided for two cultural leaders associations at Masha and Anderacha woredas. The capacity building trainings and consultations have been focused on international and national laws that are related to culture and environment, rights of community, indigenous community conserved areas (ICCA), role of sacred natural sites conservation, quality of internal management, members handling and financial management. It was able to train more than 230 members of the cultural leaders' association members on these trainings. Moreover, experience exchange visit have been organized to learn among each other as well as to share their conservation norm and experience for others, for low landers and pastoralists.

**Component 6 Planned:** Participants and educational community in 12 schools has been provided with orientation to be aware of the role and aims of SEGNI regarding bio-cultural diversity and 12 SEGNI Nature Trail experience have been organized for ~300 students (STI IV).

**Component 6 Actual at Completion:**

12 rounds Social empowerment through group and nature interaction (SEGNI) programme inside natural forest have been conducted On the 12 rounds SEGNI programme with a total of 290 (180 male and 110 females) school students have participated. Before each programme is conducted inside the forest; school level orientations have been organized and aware about the concepts of culture and biodiversity, the role of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and about the necessity of intergenerational learning, and the norms “Do’s and Don’ts” when they are in the forest. As a result of SEGNI program, many SEGNI club members have become promoters of bio-cultural conservation in the community. The number of students participating in SEGNI clubs and related activities are increasing from time to time. Existing clubs are becoming financially self sufficient by broadening their club activities. The quality and diversity of bio-cultural collections in many schools traditional huts have also increased significantly. As a result of SEGNI program implementation, the link between schools and communities have also strengthened

**Component 7 Planned:** Targeted community members have increased their skills and knowledge on beekeeping, spice and home gardening as well as on animal fattening (STI V).

**Component 7 Actual at Completion:**

50 people (39 males and 11 females) in Beekeeping, 50 in animal fattening (all are male Menja minority group members) and 50 (all are female) in spice and home gardening have trained on entrepreneurship and specific skills on each type of income generating activities. After training, the necessary equipments purchased, transported and handover for the project beneficiaries. After the official cooperatives establishment process completed and get legal recognition is obtained from legal offices then kick start (seed money) have been given to start their income generating activities.

Because of the series of capacity building trainings, follow up and technical support and monitoring and evaluation, significant livelihood improvement have been observed in all cooperatives and at individual level. Moreover, behavioral change has been observed and their dependence on natural resource product selling (charcoal, firewood and timber) significantly reduced. They are also serving as public informants when there is some illegal activities on the forest is occurred.

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

No.

***Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.***

## **Lessons Learned**

***Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.***

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

The project design process was very long and time taking. The project appraisal process was uncoordinated and different coordinators were suggesting different views from different corners and it was very demanding. As a result, the project appraisal took very long time. I hope it is better if it is coordinated from central office before it released to each partner applicants.

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

Before the project implementation, project launching workshops were organized for different stakeholders. It was very important to get the necessary support from each partner organization and also to get project acceptance by local community members. It was also make easy to select beneficiaries in transparent way at standard selection criteria (like level of their direct dependence on natural resources, daily income level, level of social and economical marginalization of the community members etc.). Once the project get acceptance by project beneficiaries as well as all stakeholders, it was easy to implement the project, follow up and give technical supports. The regular follow up and scheduled monitoring and evaluation have helped a lot in implementing the project as agreed up plan of implementation.

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

By focusing on sustainability issues of the conservation of Sheka forest biosphere reserve, we have organized community discussion forum for local community members that bordered with all core zones of the Sheka forest biosphere reserves. During discussion with the local communities, the local community members have taken the major responsibility to prevent permanent settlements or any consumptive activities inside the core zones. In addition to this, to prevent the illegal activities, they have selected community informants (Community scouts/rangers) to control some illegal activities or any accidents like forest fire happened or any massive settlement in the biosphere reserve. The selected community informants (community scouts) were trained on how they inform to he local governors and local community at regular bases from grass root level and also share the information to focal institution at woreda/district level. As incentive and to encourage the local community informants, we have given mobile phone apparatus and charge Birr 100 airtime per month. Otherwise, there was no any monthly payment or salary for local community informant. As a result, the information exchange structure from grass root level up to zone level flows smoothly and becomes fully functional.

At quarter bases, there were evaluation meetings for all community informants and focal persons at district and zone level. These meetings have created a good discussion forum among participants and it was very good instrument to build their confidence in controlling illegal activities inside the cores zones. Following theses follow up meetings, more than 50 court cases from 3 districts appeared to the court for decision. Some cases get legal measures, some are on process and few cases are rejected because some cases were difficult to get witness and some other evidences. From this project intervention we have realized that the possibility of conserving the Sheka forest biosphere reserve with active public participation in sustainable way with little or with out involvement.

### Additional Funding

*Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.*

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
MELCA-Ethiopia	B		Salaries of project staff
Norwegian Peoples Aid	A		Cost sharing of purchasing equipments, daily subsistence allowance of beneficiaries and professionals.

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

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

### Sustainability/Replicability

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

Because of the CEPF large grant support, it was able to prepare the Sheka forest management plan and management structure and meet UNESCO requirements and beyond this, the management structure of the Sheka forest Biosphere reserve from grass root up to zone level become effective and functional. In relation to this, ground demarcation and verification have been done by putting sign posts at each management zone (core, buffer and transitions) of the Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve. In addition to this, it was also able to improve the awareness of more than 340 local community members and clan leaders on environment and culture related laws (international and national laws). The livelihood of 150 marginalized community members (Menja minority group, poor women and unemployed youth and poor farmers) had been improved by organizing and providing training on sustainable utilization of non-timber forest products (beekeeping, animal fattening, spice and home gardening) and it was also be able to improve the livelihood of the project beneficiaries at least by 25%.

Regarding, SEGNI programme, it was able to conduct inter-generational learning of traditional ecological knowledge from elder to younger generation. The programme was implemented in the deep forest of Sheka forest biosphere reserve by participating 290 (180 males and 110 female) that are selected from 12 schools. SEGNI programme participants after they passed through the process, they were able to share their experience to wider school community as well as to project area local community and government officials by organizing culture and biodiversity celebration. During the celebration, the messages were transmitted in the form of drama, poem, riddles, proverbs, cultural dressing, cultural foods, and exhibition (exhibiting culture and biodiversity related collections etc.). By culture and biodiversity celebration, it was able to reach about 10,000 people and the celebration has got wider media coverage both by electronics and print Medias.

During project implementation, more emphasis has been given for the sustainability of the project and more attention has been given in actively participating all project beneficiaries from planning up to the implementation phases and develops ownership sense from the beginning up to the final stage. The sustainability and replicability issues have got more attention in all stages.

*Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.*

### **Safeguard Policy Assessment**

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

The project was implemented as per agreed up on safe guard policy and in harmony with environment, culture and on the belief of the society.

### **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

**We have successfully completed the project implementation. For our future work:**

- 1. It is better to prepare and use very easy reporting format**
- 2. Better to coordinate the project review as much as possible in central and coordinate way.**
- 3. Please, work hard in reducing the long project appraisal process and budget release process.**

## Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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**\*\*\*If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages\*\*\***

<b>Performance Tracking Report Addendum</b>
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<b>CEPF Global Targets</b>
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<b>(Enter Grant Term)</b>
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Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.  
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	Yes	238,750 Hectare	Same	Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No			Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes	238,750 Hectare	Same	
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	Yes	150 beneficiaries		

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

**Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities**

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics								Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit												
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Increased Income due to:				Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	More secure access to water resources	Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.	Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	More secure sources of energy	Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit	Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	Other
									Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental services									
Sheka forest biosphere reserve community	X	X	X						X				X			X	X	X	X		
<b>Total</b>																					

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit: