Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
35th Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council
European Commission
Brussels, Belgium
23 October 2019
14:00-17:00 Central European Summer Time (CEST)

DC 35 Minutes

1. **Welcome by the Chair and Introduction of Participants (CEPF/DC35/1)**

2. **Adoption of Agenda (CEPF/DC35/2)**

3. **Presentation and Discussion of the Executive Director's Report (CEPF/DC35/3)**

   a) Action Points Review **(CEPF/DC35/3/a)**

See meeting document for further information.

Comments:
Government of Japan/World Bank investment in the Caribbean Hotspot – The Donor Council requested an update on the timeline:

- CANARI is not currently contracted as a Regional Implementation Team. The Ecosystem Profile has been completed and a few comments are still to be integrated in order to finalize the profile soon. The Secretariat hopes that CANARI will be involved with implementation of the new project, because there are no alternative partners with comparable capacity and programmatic focus. Fortunately, CANARI is patient and understanding of the delays. Civil society in the Caribbean had some expectations that the Secretariat has tried to manage to ensure that people did not make decisions based on assumptions of CEPF funding becoming available. The issue is rather reputational than practical as CEPF's reputation is taking a bit of tarnishing. If we can deliver a new RIT by mid-2020 and start grant making, CEPF would still be able to build on the momentum that came with the first phase of investment. The World Bank is looking to build CANARI into the design of the project. As such CEPF would not need to go through the process of selecting a new Regional Implementation Team and thus could move straight ahead into grant making, making up for lost time.
- The World Bank has been working as fast as possible, supporting the pre-selection of CANARI. This would accelerate the project to be delivered by next summer 2020. The main objective of the World Bank is to make the project highly effective. The World Bank considers that CSOs should not have any expectations, as the CEPF granting process is competitive and not all CSOs will be granted money.

Other comments:
The Donor Council also commented that:

- The political scene has changed quite considerably in different ways on the importance of biodiversity and that a new European Commission will come in place in December 2019. It expects to publish a Communication on biodiversity within the first 100 days of its mandate, focused on a new ambitious biodiversity strategy for 2030.
- It is envisioned that CEPF could make a good contribution to CBD COP-15, for instance by reflecting on area-based conservation measures.

Action Point:

- The EU would like to see more national advocacy from the RITs and CSOs to raise the profile of biodiversity and be included in their communication plan.
- The EU will exchange with CEPF secretariat on countries to prioritize for national advocacy.
- Olivier Langrand will speak directly to AFD on its ideas for CEPF's contribution to CBD COP-15.

b) Partnership Highlights **(CEPF/DC35/3/b)**

See meeting document for further information.

Comments:
The Donor Council commented that:

- When the RITs go out to countries where there are EU delegations, it is important to visit those delegations especially as the EU is pre-programming, so that they know what CEPF is doing as it will be strategic for all the work done on biodiversity and could lead to more investment.
- CEPF should demonstrate its approach and results to KfW. CEPF needs to showcase better what KfW would learn from CEPF. For example, the Blue Action Fund could benefit from CEPF methods (Ecosystem Profiling).
- KfW is very sensitive about what has happened lately with WWF, and the EU will want to be kept up to date on work with WWF offices (i.e. WWF Russia as RIT for Central Asia).
- The EU-DG DEVCO funding in 2021-2027 is expected to be increasingly "geographic" (regional and national levels) with a significant reduction in the relative share of global programs.

CEPF responded to the Council that the WWF-Russia is an independent structure related to the WWF network and will be monitored closely. Also, CEPF does not allow any of its funding to be transferred to government entities, such as protected area management authorities.

Action Points:

- CEPF is requesting support from Donor Council members to reach out to KfW to become a global donor rather than just a regional donor: CEPF will pursue inviting KfW to attend the next Donor Council meeting.
- The Donor Council will discuss at the next Donor Council meeting getting funding from corporations:

- Donor Council members are requested to put together a list of their experiences on funding from corporations.
- Donor Council members are requested to put together a list of corporations interested in investing in biodiversity conservation or provide links to relevant business initiatives.

c) Financial Narrative **(CEPF/DC35/3/c)**

See meeting document for further information.

d) Financial Report **(CEPF/DC35/3/d)**

See meeting document for further information.

e) Q1 Approved Grants **(CEPF/DC35/3/e)**

4. Selection of Hotspots for Investment (CEPF/DC35/4)

See meeting document for further information.

The Donors Council approved a full reinvestment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot and a partial investment in the Tropical Andes Hotspot.

The Donor Council also recommended reaching out to China for further investment in Indo-Burma, as China is looking to invest in biodiversity conservation.

5. Proposal to begin CEPF investment in the West Bank, Palestinian territories (CEPF/DC35/5)

See meeting document for further information.

The Donor Council approved the proposal to begin CEPF investment in the Palestinian territories but felt it was not useful to mention the amounts allocated to this sub-region (very small initially).

Donor Council members also recommended to be very careful about security of the Secretariat, RIT and grantee staff. Members further advised on possible scientific collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians and suggested that relevant Israelis be informed about CEPF investment.

6. 2019 Grantee Perception Survey (CEPF/DC35/6)

See meeting document for further information.

The Donor Council was asked to comment on the results of the 2019 Grantee Perception Survey and follow-up actions proposed by the Secretariat.

Questions for the Donor Council:

- Is the Donor Council satisfied with the action points identified by the Secretariat to address the concerns of the grantees?
- Are the survey results useful to the donors as a means to further justify partnership in CEPF?
- Does the Donor Council see value in continuing the survey and reporting on an annual basis?

- Does the Donor Council see value in making the survey results available to the public?

Comments:
The Donor Council welcomed the Grantee Perception Survey and made the following recommendations:

- Optimize equally visits to grantees over the life of the investment.
- The information does not need to be made public, but grantees should be apprised of the results, so they know their voices are being heard.
- A frequency of every three years should be enough.

Members noted numerous grantee comments of the need for more training and simplification of processes. The Secretariat explained that CEPF is fully involved in streamlining its reporting. Also, CEPF has an open call for developing a Master Class for applicants writing their proposals, which will have modules and provide better training on CEPF requirements.

Action Points:

- The results of the of Grantee Perception Survey will be shared with Grantees.
- CEPF will plan to present the survey results to the Donor Council every three years.

7. Collaborating on Communications (CEPF/DC35/7)
See meeting document for further information.

The Donor Council is asked to share CEPF communications products and facilitate their use by the respective communication teams.

Questions for the Donor Council

- What do you need from CEPF communications for 2020 events?
- How can we collaborate to seize the day for biodiversity conservation?

Comments:
The Donor Council commented that:

- In relation to the preparation of the CBD COP15 in China, there may be an opportunity to fast track some funding for Indo-Burma.
- CEPF could be put in touch with both DG DEVCO and DG Environment communication units on how to cooperate around the European Development Days in Brussels on 9-10 June, to get as high a level of communications as possible and collaborate in-country and work with the EU delegations for some outreach to national governments. The EU could also post on Twitter short videos, links to interviews or photos. The EU recommended making the most of best practices and publicizing them around as much as possible and systematically showcase CEPF practical success stories.
- CI is pushing for a big investment from China and thinks that $25M over 5 years towards CEPF would be doable: CI recommended making videos on biodiversity in Mandarin with Chinese stars using CEPF branding and preparing innovative material to be ready for Kunming. It could be something done jointly with the AFD. CI encouraged more thoughts on communications between biodiversity and climate.

- Communications are key and some members offered to help disseminating CEPF communications tools.

The Chair recommended that CEPF send people to the events of 2020, including Marseille and Kunming, as they will be unique opportunities to celebrate CEPF's 20th anniversary and will be good for visibility and physical interaction.

Action Points:

- The GEF would be happy to collaborate on any event at WCC and CBD COP 15 promoting CEPF and will put CEPF Secretariat in contact with the person in relation to Indo-Burma.
- Julia Marton-Lefèvre will put CEPF in contact with the project Icebreaker, funded by the government of Monaco (who had funded Luc Jacquet, documentary director of the March of the Penguins). They are going to be filming in several countries where CEPF works.

8. Any other business

The Chair concluded the meeting by mentioning a few things to keep in mind in the upcoming months and for the next Donor Council Meeting:

- Possible DC retreat or meeting to last more than four-hours-long at one of the 2020 events.
- Possible funding from corporations.
- Possible funding from China.
- Possible CEPF grassroots ambassadors (grantees) to help carry the message on biodiversity conservation at 2020 events.
    - Possibly looking for youth, any/all nationalities well-spoken on biodiversity, such as in the EU Ambassador program.