



USAID
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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION, LEARNING AND OUTREACH (ECO)

BI-ANNUAL STATUS REPORT

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Environmental Communications, Learning, and Outreach (ECO)

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BI-ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

USAID’s Environmental Communication, Learning and Outreach (ECO) program began in October 2013 and is part of the Bureau of Economic Growth, Education and Environment’s (E3) efforts to meet USAID objectives in training, communication, knowledge management and facilitation in the Environment and Natural Resources Management (ENRM) sector and Global Climate Change (GCC) issue area. The two primary ECO program objectives are (1) to provide USAID staff and the broader development community with the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to design, implement, monitor and evaluate quality programs and (2) to develop and enhance communications and information management systems that facilitate knowledge sharing and learning for improved development impact. ECO builds on the lessons learned and activities from the Capitalizing Knowledge, Connecting Communities (CK2C) contract (including the ENRM- Learning Initiative (ENRM-LI) and the Office of Global Climate Change’s Training, Outreach and Communications Task Order (GCC TOC). The work to be performed under this Task Order consists of the following four tasks:

- Task 1: Competency-based Training
- Task 2: Knowledge Management
- Task 3: Communications and Reporting
- Task 4: Facilitation

The ECO implementation team is currently comprised of Training Resources Group, Inc. (TRG), Engility/IRG and Forum One Communications. This bi-annual report covers the period from April 1, 2014 to September 31, 2014. The report provides an activity dashboard for each task area that rates the status of each activity’s timeline, budget, and content using a stop light color coding method. In addition to the activity dashboards, the report provides discussion of each task area’s significant accomplishments, implementation issues, approaches to address those issues, and success stories. The status symbols for the dashboard ratings are outlined below:

-  - **Red light**- this status symbol means there is a significant delay in timeline, overspending or a higher burn rate than expected, or other serious implementation issues.
-  -**Yellow light**- this status symbol means the activity is moving along with a few minor issues either in spending, timeline or implementation.
-  -**Green light**- this status symbol means that this activity is on track with no issues with spending, timeline, or implementation.
-  -**Blue light**- this status symbol means that this activity is completed.

HIGHLIGHTS

In the second half of its first year, the ECO project has several significant achievements to report. The utilization of the Learning Needs Assessment data to develop a draft integrated, yet tailored, ECO Learning Strategy was an integral milestone of this period. This Learning Strategy is designed to serve as a guiding framework for this project's planning and activity implementation. A key element of the Learning Strategy is the Monitoring and Evaluation component. During this period, ECO has made great strides in creating the infrastructure needed for the project's PMEP and adaptive learning mechanisms.

The project also had several noteworthy learning events and activities that include implementing the Global Climate Change training course in July, hosting the Stocktaking Guide webinar, revamping the SCAPES Climate Adaptation Learning Tool, and supporting the communications strategy and products for the Biodiversity Policy Launch.

LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ECO completed a thorough qualitative and quantitative Learning Need Assessment (LNA) process. This process included the implementation of a survey comprised of 55 questions that achieved a high response rate of 437 of 1500. The process included 14 focus group and 23 interviews as well.

The purpose of the Learning Needs Assessment was to identify learning required to ensure that USAID staff are equipped to manage programs and/or integrate programming considerations for Environment and Natural Resources Management (ENRM), Global Climate Change (GCC) and Water.

On April 3, 2014, ECO held a meeting in which all offices came together to review and validate the data from this assessment. From there, ongoing conversations have been occurring to develop a collective Learning Strategy for the project moving forward. In this strategy, ECO is using the LNA findings as a foundation for the definition of project's theory of change and logical framework and to map out tailored learning agendas or paths for each office.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

It is important to note that the data from the LNA offered the offices helpful information to inform the planning and development of learning activities, but it did not offer clear directives of specifically what trainings or learning events to offer. The data must be viewed and discussed in context with each office's specific strategies and priorities.

Given the varying schedules and staff available for the different offices, it has taken longer than anticipated to finalize the Learning Strategy document.

APPROACHES TO ADDRESS ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

The document is being viewed as an adaptive document that evolves over time. ECO is engaging in ongoing collaborative conversations with the different offices to revise the Learning Strategy.

TASK I: COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION

COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING ACTIVITY DASHBOARD

Activity Title	Timeline Status	Budget Status	Content Status	Comments
LTRM Training Activities				
Stocktaking Training Course (field based-Overseas)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial meeting will take place in November 2014. Lisa Horward-Grabman will be the course Adult Learning Specialist.
SCALE Online Promotion				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions are underway and the new course will be on USAID University by October 16.
Training Calendar				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is draft calendar. We need to be able to confirm dates and location of learning events.
GCC Training Activities				
GCC 101				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing. Will review with GCC office in early spring 2015 to see what revisions are needed. Anticipate a larger update in 2016.
DC GCC – July Training 2014				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered. During the week a 2-day GCC adaptation course was offered, ½ day Clean Energy and ½ day LEADS, 1 day Sustainable Landscapes and 1 day Monitoring and Reporting. All courses received good evaluations.
LEADS Virtual Learning Program				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modules 1-2 are under development as agreed with Jenny Kane and Jennifer Leisch by January 31, 2015 Modules 3-4 will be included in the upcoming workplan and will begin in 2015.
Mission Trainings (Senegal-2014) plus 2015 delivery				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress for October 20-24 training in Senegal.

GCC KSAs				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress. KSAs went to the first review and the team is ready to send a new version for a final review before start writing the learning guide.
Facilitating Different Audience Knowledge Levels				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target date: January 2015. This is a single-day facilitation training. Need to do an amendment to the work plan to start preparing in 2014.
Water Training Activities				
WASH course				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course will be delivered as is in spring 2015. Need to organize a trainer's team meeting to discuss. Need to update the budget.
Water and GCC				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tabled for now. Need to have future conversations - from GCC Office perspective it may be integrated into Water Smart Agriculture course.
Urban Office Training Activities				
Urban Primer				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline has been delayed due to ECO online development support availability and the internal clearance review. The course is now on track and up online in USAID University and will be reviewed in January 2015 for revisions.
Integrated Training Activities				
Designing Integrated Environment Programs Course				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to have scoping conversation (tentative for November 2014), still pending to clarify what the course will be about. Need to decide when the course will be delivered in 2015.

Integrated Environment Programs - Mentorship Program				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to have conversations about it with all offices and define how the program can be organized.
Environment Matters Course				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course is being programmed for December 4th, 2014. Need to define the Water Office trainer. Need to decide on 2015 date.
PEF Course Online Updates and Communications				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is currently under review by USAID and comments will be sent to ECO by October 10, 2014. Based on the extent of revisions, a revised work plan timeline will be developed.
ENRM 101				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion about the material, target Nov-Dec 2014 to have a conversation how this will move forward in the 2015 work plan.

TASK AREA OVERVIEW

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE TRAINING, JULY 2014

USAID’s Office of Global Climate Change, located in the Economic Growth, Education and Environment Bureau (E3) lead a week-long training program, supported by the ECO team. This interactive training program took place at the Washington Learning Center in Arlington, Virginia, from July 14-18, 2014.

An average of 21 participants attended each day, for a total of 36 unique participants throughout the week. While the participant results of the training evaluations are captured in the Success Story below, this was also a success from the ECO perspective as the team began to pull together best practices for training and logistics to include the:

- Creation of a training checklist to assist with all the details of logistics from both the client and ECO perspective.
- Design of facilitator materials, including a Trainers Guide and Activity Write-ups.
- Plan for ECO to host a “Facilitator’s One-day Training” to discuss and experience techniques to facilitate knowledge sharing when having an audience with high and very low levels of understanding of the content topics.

Success Story

A full week of core Global Climate Change courses (Adaptation, Clean Energy, LEEDS, Sustainable Landscapes and Monitoring and Reporting) provided an introduction to Climate Change and USAID Climate Change programming. The courses offered an experiential approach to allow staff throughout the Agency (examples of the sectors that participated in the training include agriculture, health, food security and program offices) the opportunity to learn how to integrate climate change into Agency's programming and how to communicate about it.

Activities and presentations were conducted by a cadre of USAID GCC Office professionals and trainers, as well as implementers.

An average of 21 participants attended each day, for a total of 36 unique participants throughout the week. USAID staff represented 27 of the total participants and 8 came from partner organizations. There were 20 male and 16 female participants. Participants included nine USAID staff from: Ethiopia, Mali, Ukraine, Haiti, Dominican Republic, West Africa, Macedonia, Indonesia and Peru Missions.

In general, comments were positive and indicative of a successful event. Over 75% felt that the course "successfully met" or "met" their expectations.

Several key themes emerged as major learning points, including:

- *The integration of Climate Change as it relates to development work within other sectors;*
- *The USAID perspective and framework for funding and activities; and*
- *How to identify climate change stressors and their role in all projects.*

Participants expressed appreciation both for the presentations, as well as the knowledge and specific examples which the speakers brought to the table. One participant noted "it was very helpful to have speakers working on specific projects share their experience".

Many also felt this broadened their thinking about how to approach climate change in their current programming, and plan to use these skills and resources in their work, both now and moving forward with new projects. The keywords and specific phrasing needed to consider Climate Change adaptation contributed to the participants' knowledge, such as how to "identify Climate Change as a determining factor to the overall trajectory of the project".

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

- The ECO team is still working with its USAID counterparts to determine the overall training agenda. This is a slow process given the need to have more information from the ECO Learning Strategy, as well as each office internal learning strategies.
- The ECO team is defining systems to manage not only the training courses or activities but also knowledge management activities, a key question is what are the systems required to best manage the training portfolio in a way that interfaces well with the LMS and the data management requirements.
- A major struggle has been within the ongoing issues with and limited capabilities of USAID University. Managing information for training to pull participant data, access to uploading trainings into the system, and testing courses prior to roll-out, are high priority items for the training team, but not always available in a timely manner. In addition, hosting trainings on a site external to USAID

University means data must be manually entered in to the system. More time and consultation is needed to clarify this issue.

- Additionally, the majority of training events so far has been in response to the Climate Change Office needs. The training needs of other offices are still not clarified. A major challenge is not being able to identify dates and trainers for those learning events.

APPROACHES TO ADDRESS ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

- ECO has been working with the GCC office to pull together some best practices for training, such as checklists and standard forms. The next steps include bringing these to use across the entire ECO training portfolio.
- ECO needs to better understand the capabilities and pitfalls of the USAID LMS. To do that ECO is working to schedule a conversation with the LMS administrator. Key subjects for this meeting are data collection, reporting and data management. This should help guide decision-making around systems for the online training component. In addition, the ECO team is completing the list of data requirements for ECO tasks and with that will engage in a conversation with the USAID counterparts to make decisions about data management related to trainings.
- To address the anticipated needs of the offices, especially as ECO begins planning the 2015 work plan, the team intends to hold a meeting with the 4 offices training managers and hopes to hold these on a regular basis (at least one meeting per month).

TASK 2: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DASHBOARD

Activity Title	Timeline Status	Budget Status	Content Status	Comments
LTRM Office KM Activities				
RM Portal refresh				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity has been going well; it has just taken a little longer to get through developing all the desired wire frame enhancements than expected. • Amendment needed to complete as all funds have been used.
FRAME Web General Administration				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO has set up a new server support contract and transferred the url domain over to the project to ensure effective management of the site. • ECO experienced delays in the implementation with this activity related to being able to switch over the FRAMEweb server

				account to the ECO project.
FAB KM Activities				
SCAPES Climate Adaptation Learning Tool				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site improvements have been completed. • Will request a no-cost extension to provide final content entry training to USAID staff.
Integrated KM Activities				
ECO Links Series Strategy Development and Implementation				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been very hard to build a pipeline of events based on the various offices' priorities and interests. • ECO is testing various strategies to get the series going without burdening the offices.

TASK AREA OVERVIEW

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RM PORTAL REFRESH

A usability assessment of the RM Portal was conducted in Dec. 2013. In order to implement some of the recommendations from that report, LTRM requested ECO support to do a RM Portal Refresh to include enhancements to several elements spanning from the home page to visual design to the search results pages among many others. The ECO project worked with Dr. Rose Hessmiller and produced wireframes to support the required enhancements. The ECO project was not charged with implementing the wireframes.

ECO has created a number of new wireframes which are in various stages of implementation by the team at Ferguson-Lynch. In order to complete the last wireframes, an amendment to the activity is needed.

SCAPES ADAPTATION LEARNING TOOL

The SCAPES Climate Adaptation Learning tool went through a series of feature enhancements and design improvements to provide a more user friendly tool for climate change practitioners. Significant accomplishments include:

1. Held 1-day workshop to identify site goals and desired improvements to the current site.
2. Restructured back-end for content entry by non-developers (more control over tool steps and content)
3. Plan to trained content managers at USAID training scheduled for early Oct.
4. Improved user interface, including:
 - a. More visually appealing
 - b. Better user 'flow' and context
 - c. Applying USAID and SCAPES branding
5. Improved user experience, by:

- d. Creating potential for more context around tool (increase user understanding)
- e. Supporting non-users decision-making process to become users (explaining the tool to newcomers)
- f. Allowing users to easily review and edit their responses
6. Conducted usability testing with small pool of users
 - g. Feedback catalogued for potential future enhancements

FRAMEWEB MANAGEMENT

The FRAMEWeb management activity has a number of successes though there still remains a great deal of work to be done.

- Hired a competent online community manager
- Resolved the issue of the URL ownership (which at one time threatened to stop all activities on FRAMEWeb)
- Set-up a process to back up FRAMEWeb (it had not been backed up since the end of the previous contract)
- Added a part-time windows administrator to help resolve issues with FRAMEweb
- Set-up a process to move FRAMEWeb to a company which offers regular backups and troubleshooting services (the previous hos: Amazon Cloud offered no service except hosting)
- Revived the FRAMEGrams
- Conducted an analysis of the different active communities on FRAMEWeb as a precursor to developing a strategy to increase activity on FRAMEWeb

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

The ECOLinks Webinar and Speaker series has had trouble lining up a pipeline of events in order to build momentum. This ranges from challenges with availability of speakers, competing priorities, and limited human resources.

The FRAMEweb administration task has experience ongoing challenges resulting from the hand-off from the previous contract. In addition to challenges with the basic maintenance and server support, the activity also has to revitalize the community after an extended period of time without regular upkeep.

APPROACHES TO ADDRESS ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

The ECO team has developed resources such as an online event activity menu as well as a webinar and speaker event to help streamline planning and procedures for implementing ECOLinks events and is working on new strategies to boost the involvement of different offices in the series.

ECO is setting up appropriate server support contracts and developing a community engagement strategy to address both issues discussed above. In addition, ECO is planning to start a discovery process to help inform USAID on the best investments to make to ensure that FRAMEWeb is a viable site beyond the tenure of the ECO project.

TASK 3: COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

LTRM COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING ACTIVITY STATUS DASHBOARD

Activity Title	Timeline Status	Budget Status	Content Status	Comments
3.1 LTRM Communications Activities				
3.1.1: Format/Layout Geospatial Training Documents				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting further guidance from LTRM on production status/next steps Need to potentially add LOE for instructional design to SOW
3.1.2: Office Fact Sheets/Packets				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting further guidance from USAID on activity and timeline
3.1.3: Stocktaking Guide Webinar				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed activity
3.2 FAB Communications and Reporting Activities				
3.2.1: Biodiversity Policy Launch Event				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In August, ECO received a request for additional edits to the one pagers. ECO provided the PDF print ready versions to USAID in September. ECO is awaiting the InDesign and 508 compliant files from our graphic designer before closing this task.
3.2.2: Biodiversity Handbook				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall a slow initial start after several months scoping the activity due to USAID concerns over budget. Once SOW agreed upon, ECO provided mock up layouts in August ECO conducted an initial copy edit of all five chapters in September. USAID needs to make further edits to the chapters and obtain clearances before ECO can continue work.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO is in the process of amending the SOW to adjust the timeline and also add additional LOE for the copy editor. • ECO anticipates finalizing the publication of the Handbook by mid/late Dec 2014.
3.3 GCC Communications and Reporting Activities				
3.3.1: GCC Glossy				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO has been working on this activity on and off since January. • Phase 1 involved ECO conducting research and writing for the 20 page document (Jan-May). • Following feedback from USAID management, ECO shifted to Phase II to only focus on copy edit and layout (Aug-Dec). • The latest thinking is that ECO would produce this 20 page report as an interactive flip book available only online, in time for unveiling during COP-20 in December.
3.3.2: GCC CKM Work plan (see individual activities below)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GCC CKM work plan encompasses several activities outlined below. In sum, most activities are progressing well.
News Summaries				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO has submitted five monthly climate related news summaries, a compilation of news gathered and condensed into a concise format for USAID. • While the activity is going well, ECO initially struggled with understanding the client's preferred format/template. In addition, given that this activity is on a monthly production cycle, it would be helpful to get client feedback.
Social Media				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater lead time by USAID and clarifying key GCC messages would have improved the implementation of this activity.

<p>Content Packages:</p> <p>-Powering Ag</p> <p>-Power Africa</p> <p>-Indonesia/ Philippines</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity is the one area where there was been delay on the USAID side in determining placement/use of final deliverables. • For the Powering Ag theme, ECO wrote a feature story in Frontlines on Challenge Grant Winner iDE and its climate adaptation work in Honduras, Nepal and Zambia. Unfortunately the blog article was never published by Impact blog. • For Power Africa, ECO drafted a Climate Change cheat sheet that was never used by USAID. • For Indonesia and the Philippines, ECO is in the process of developing 7 stories for USAID use. There is still some uncertainty as to how these stories will be used/what distribution channels exist.
<p>Materials Production:</p> <p>Banners</p> <p>GCC Calendar</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO is on target to finalize four retractable GCC banners in Oct/Nov. • ECO is also on target to produce a 2015 GCC calendar for distribution at COP-20.
<p>GCC CKM Repo</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial work on the CKM Repo is complete, though we went slightly over budget. GCC has requested a number of refinements and a new task order is currently pending approval.
<p>3.3.3: GCC website</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCC Website is slightly behind schedule but we are making progress. Discovery took longer than scheduled, and initial feature scoping is proceeding slowly. The team has raised these concerns with the product owner, and we will be adjusting pacing or deadlines to accommodate.
<p>3.3.4: PFAN Infographic</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While this activity took several months and iterations, it was finalized in print and electronic format in September. ECO will be transmitting the final electronic files to USAID soon.

TASK AREA OVERVIEW

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STOCKTAKING GUIDE WEBINAR

The **Stocktaking guide webinar** took place on July 21 and was the first webinar in the ECOLinks series (originally characterized under the Communications Task Area). It successfully used processes and methods developed by the webinar team and was well received. Attendance could have doubled with earlier and more intense advertising. For future webinars in the series, there will be at least a 4-6 week period where the event will be advertised through various means and interested parties allowed to register in advance; advance registration will allow the ECO project to send regular reminders to potential participants.

Key Stats:

- 39 participants attended this online event
- 52% of people who registered for the event attended the webinar.
- 21 Questions answered in real time from participants
- 21% of participants were affiliated with USAID
- 2 participants were affiliated with the World Bank and the USGS
- 55 minutes was the average length of time online
- During the webinar 19 participants (49% of attendees) downloaded a resource from FRAMEweb.

BIODIVERSITY POLICY LAUNCH

ECO supported the successful **Biodiversity Policy Launch**. As part of this effort, ECO supported the Forestry and Biodiversity Office to produce a messaging document, photo montage, develop five informational one-pagers and implement the day of event. Post event, ECO has provided additional support through sub-contractors to create event video clips with transcripts and make final revisions to the event materials.

Success Story

GCC Social Media efforts at Frontiers: ECO successfully and effectively provided social media support to the GCC office for the 2014 Frontiers in Development Forum. ECO support included participating in two LPA social media team meetings prior to the event, researching relevant information and messaging, and pre-scheduling ten Tweets for release during the event using the @USAIDenviro handle. A member of the ECO team also participated in the Friday September 19 session, attended relevant sessions and took notes on key messages and speakers for future use. The Tweets sent were well-received and focused on key messages from the event.

Success Story



Indonesia/Philippines USAID climate coverage: ECO's writer, Anne Usber, traveled to the Philippines and Indonesia in August on behalf of the GCC Office and conducted wide ranging interviews about USAID projects that are both helping countries build resilience to climate change and cut carbon dioxide emissions. Interviews ranged from senior officials to 'man on the street.' Anne also shot hundreds of photos and video of select sites. A total of 7 feature stories are currently under development, and will be completed by the end of October. All "success stories" are aimed at USAID outreach or other channels, to highlight key projects and show how USAID is making a difference in advancing climate goals. In addition, Anne sat down with Secretary Sering, vice chair of the Philippines Climate Change Commission, for a Q/A interview. Finally, while in Indonesia, Anne also offered a 2-hour training program in Jakarta on how to write success stories for 25 of USAID's implementing partners. Her training, which included take-home materials and a writing exercise, was well-received. "It gave me so much new information and knowledge about how to write with impact," said one participant.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

In August, ECO received a request to go back and make some edits to the one-page documents from the Biodiversity Launch. A final PDF print ready version was submitted to USAID in September and ECO is working with its graphic designer to produce the final 508 compliant versions of these revised documents as well as the InDesign files for editing in the future as needed. Also, several files were taken down from the shared "Final Deliverables" Google Drive folder for this event causing some confusion with the close-out of this activity.

The GCC CKM Work Plan activities experienced some issues related to the management and implementation of the activities. Given the nature of the communications tasks for this office, ECO had to revisit each activity scope and budget several times.

APPROACHES TO ADDRESS ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

ECO is following up with its graphic designer about this issue before approving invoices. The Google Drive final deliverables folder has been reviewed and all documents, videos, etc. have been uploaded to the folder. Also, a short After Action Review will be held on October 8th, 2014 to discuss lessons learned for future

events, review the final costs, review the final deliverables folder for completeness and identify any additional follow-up steps before closing this activity.

In an effort to create efficiency in the management process for the GCC CKM Work Plan tasks, ECO developed a more flexible scoping and management mechanisms allowing for buckets of resources to be allocated and utilized for specific types of communications tasks. This new mechanism is currently being refined and should be approved by mid-October.

TASK 4: FACILITATION IMPLEMENTATION

FACILITATION ACTIVITY STATUS DASHBOARD

Activity Title	Timeline Status	Budget Status	Content Status	Comments
FAB Facilitation Activities				
4.2.1 FAB Office Meetings and Retreats				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three meetings in the current work plan have been completed as of 9/31/14. Budget for these activities needed to be expanded from the original budget to include catering for the FAB retreat.
4.2.2 Annual SCAPES Meeting				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current SCAPES Annual retreat has been concluded and all materials submitted to USAID for review. There has been a delay in reviewing materials and finalizing to publish on FRAME. ECO is following up with USAID and will have the issue resolved by 10/17/14.
4.2.3 SCAPES Learning Assessment				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft of the SCAPES Learning Assessment was submitted in August 2014. ECO is working with USAID and the MI Contract to finalize by 10/31/14.

TASK AREA OVERVIEW

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In from May through September 2014, ECO provided meeting design and facilitation support for 4 Forestry and Biodiversity events. This included the final SCAPES Annual Meeting, a 2-day FAB Office Retreat and 2 half-day FAB Office Meetings on the Biodiversity Policy Implementation.

Success Story

The final SCAPES Annual Meeting brought together USAID and NGO partners from the African Wildlife Foundation, World Wildlife Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Society, and PACT to celebrate and reflect on the tremendous efforts of this 5 year collaborative program. In support of USAID, ECO provided meeting design and facilitation services to create an open, engaging and fruitful meeting. Overall, 81.5% of participants rated the meeting “very useful”. Some illustrative comments from the evaluations include:

- *“This was my first meeting and it exceeded my expectations.”*
- *“Thank you USAID for giving us all opportunities to meet, share, and network. Keep up the great deeds!”*
- *“Very practical discussions and great sharing.”*

- *“Collaborative and intensive meetings between the various NGOs is fantastic. Lots of energy and good ideas. This helps break down barriers that often exist between groups through other efforts.”*

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

The facilitation activities have faced challenges in the follow-up to events/tasks on both the ECO and USAID side. With travel and other work commitments some deliverables have taken longer to move from draft to final version to wrap up activities.

APPROACHES TO ADDRESS ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

By October 31, Meredith Ferris will follow up with all FAB Activity Managers to ensure they are satisfied with the deliverables for each event and complete the necessary work to move materials from draft to finalized as needed. The project will aim to close both the SCAPES Annual Meeting and SCAPES Learning Assessment activities by October 31 and hold After Action Reviews as needed.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING ACTIVITY DASHBOARD

Activity Title	Timeline Status	Budget Status	Content Status	Comments
General Program Management				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO has improved the efficiency in which it is able respond to the offices' changing needs and incorporate new activities and amendments into the work plan. • With all of the new staff coming into E3, ECO has had to invest more time working with them and educating them on the contract.
Office Task Management				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO has been highly responsive to the offices' needs in this area. • As this is a new mechanism, the ECO project is still working out how best to budget and anticipate the needs for the work being done under this activity per office.
Project Monitoring and Evaluation				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO has been working consistently on developing different elements of the project monitoring and evaluation plan during this period. • This activity has experienced some delays in the timeline and

				development as this activity was linked to the Learning Strategy development process that was a bit behind schedule (more details discussed below).
Contact Database				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO has done much research and had several meeting to move this activity forward. • Due to the complex and varying needs of the project, the design and implementation of this activity has taken longer than anticipated
Activity Calendar				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO is making progress on this activity and is close to firming up dates for a pipeline of learning events.

TASK AREA OVERVIEW

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The ECO project made significant strides in refining existing project management systems and developing new strategies where needed to support the complex and evolving needs of the project. The need for effective communications and information sharing has remained high in order to support the collaborative and adaptive management approach. In the past 6 months, ECO has continued to initiate meetings to encourage discussion and collaboration within offices and across task areas. In addition, ECO successfully developed a Phase 2 work plan that outlines the project’s activity plan through December 31, 2014. This work plan contains several integrated activities that bring together multiple offices around a single initiative in an effort to utilize resources more effectively. In addition to more integrated activities, the project has been utilizing an office-level Task Management charge code that has allowed for offices to work together to develop sustainable learning processes and systems.

During this period, the project began to transition out of a start-up phase and has stabilized in many project management areas. A significant milestone for the project is developing its staffing pattern to more fully support the goals of the project. In an effort to have sustained focus on the M&E and adaptive learning, the project brought on a senior expert who provides the innovative technical leadership for creating and implementing that function across all four task areas. In service of supporting a robust M&E effort with a focus on adaptive learning, the project also identified the need for addition operations support in the form of another dedicated Project Associate. This position will be filled in the coming months. Beyond staffing, the project has refined its work plan amendment mechanism allowing for not only more efficient activity management but also adaptability and flexibility.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

While having a collaborative approach with USAID is essential, the number of meetings to discuss the scope of future activities, amendments to existing activities, and work planning continues to be greater than has been initially anticipated. Part of this can be attributed to the influx of new USAID staff responsible for

different elements of the ECO project portfolio. It has simply required more time to explain the history and features of the project to them.

While the office-wide Task Management code has been a helpful mechanism to allow for scoping conversations, developing systems and processes, and coordination, there still seems to be an unmet need for the task area groups to meet and plan collectively together (i.e. all offices coming together to discuss Training or CKM).

In addition, it has taken longer than anticipated to hire a replacement Sr. Communications Advisor to manage Task 3 (Communications and Reporting). An offer was made to a candidate but it was not accepted.

ECO experienced some delays with the development of the Learning Strategy and PMEP. This was due to a variety of reasons including the USAID offices not being able to engage in the development of the documents until certain key internal benchmarks were complete (e.g. GCC KSA, FAB office retreat, and new staff hired).

APPROACHES TO ADDRESS ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

ECO has worked to reduce the number of participants in meetings and refine its operating processes to help reduce the program management costs where possible. This is something that ECO is hopeful will level off and begin declining in with the implementation of the 2015 work plan.

ECO is exploring the value and feasibility of creating a charging mechanism to bring different offices together around a specific area for integrated planning and system development.

The ECO team has increased its efforts to spread a wider recruitment net for potential candidates and redoubled its recruiting efforts for the Sr. Communications Advisor. It plans to have the new Sr. Communications Advisor hired by January 1, 2015.

ECO has a meeting scheduled on Oct. 6, 2014 with USAID to review a draft Learning Strategy, a Strategic Objective framework, and a Logical Framework. The ECO team plans to work with USAID during the next reporting period to make finalizing the Learning Strategy and PMEP a key priority.