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GCP Activity Report

Introduction:

To pave the way in achieving WWF's global goal of conserving biodiversity in the Global 200, the ECOSNature project seeks to conserve the full extent of biodiversity in the southwest Amazon, Atlantic Forests, Forests of the Lower Mekong, Sulu Sulawesi Seas and Bering Sea ecoregions. These provide testing grounds to strengthen ecoregion conservation as an innovative approach for broad-scale conservation. This project relies on fundamental principles of learning and adaptive management which are promoted through core project management through various exchange and communication mechanisms.

The past six months of the ECOSNature Project resulted in significant strides that include the development of ambitious, long-term biodiversity visions. These visions help to guide WWF and other partners in identifying strategic actions that address threats at multiple scales. These actions include short-term interventions, such as direct enforcement against unsustainable fisheries in the Sulu Sulawesi Seas as well as longer-term activities that lay the foundation for conservation far into the future, such as building a network of conservation constituents across a corridor in the Southwest Amazon. The following provides brief highlights followed by more detailed information on results from the past six months supported by USAID.

Highlights:

- “Learning Across Boundaries: Broad-Scale Conservation” workshop held with GCP partners as an important step towards greater learning and collaboration.
- *Add others here that are marked in text...*

Project Management

Summary for Period 06/01/00 – 11/30/00

Core project management plays an essential function for coordinating communication and facilitating learning across ECOSNature ecoregions, the WWF network and the broader conservation community. The past six months were particularly important for extending the exchange of approaches ideas beyond WWF to the GCP partners and other initiatives in global biodiversity conservation. This includes convening meetings and workshops (e.g. within

WWF and with GCP partners), supporting small grants to spur innovative implementation and production of communication products as vehicles for sharing lessons and peer learning.

Highlights:

Overall Project Management:

- Convened two workshops for learning and exchange: “Ecoregions in Action” for WWF ecoregional staff and “Learning Across Boundaries – Broad-Scale Conservation” for WWF and GCP partners.
- Published several key documents on ecoregion conservation that were distributed broadly.

For EAI:

- By-laws, regulations and act of constitution finalized and process initiated to legalize the new Foundation.
- Procedures and manuals for Foundation administration completed.
- Provisional Board formed to accompany the process of legalization and oversee the process of selection of the first Board.
- New Minister for Sustainable Development and Planning and his advisor updated and incorporated into the process.
- Public Call for nomination of the Board Members was made nationwide, 65 nominations were received and the Provisional Board and Founders should have the new Board formed by February 2001.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 Effective programmatic and financial administration to advance conservation impact in ECOSNature ecoregions

With the full complement of the coordination team on board, administration of the ECOSNature LWA is progressing well. In addition to continued improvement of reporting and liaising with USAID, the coordination team focused on facilitating learning and exchange both within WWF and across the conservation community as a fundamental principle of the ECOSNature project. Accomplishments for these are detailed below.

1.2 Facilitate activities and communication as opportunities for exchange and learning to advance Ecoregion Conservation implementation

An important focus for this past 6 months was designing and facilitating opportunities for learning both within WWF and across the conservation community. Two workshops were held, several publications produced to reflect lessons learned thus far and support for ecoregional exchanges and innovative ideas to carry out ecoregion conservation in a variety of contexts. A brief summary of each of these accomplishments follows.

“Ecoregions in Action” Spain, November 2000

Over the past year, the number of WWF staff devoted to working on ecoregional programmes has nearly doubled. Following last year’s ecoregion coordinators workshop, a second workshop was held to meet this demand from ecoregional field staff to share experience and strengthen capacity for conservation at this broader scale. This workshop was designed with their input and was specifically geared to support ecoregional teams (rather than just representatives) to discuss challenges and solutions within their own ecoregions (such as Atlantic Forests and Southwest Amazon) as well as meet with and learn from other ecoregions. While some ecoregion programs are well established, there are others just beginning and this workshop provided a critical venue for peer review to learn from the collective experience across the WWF Network. For instance, particularly for ‘veteran’ ecoregions with several years of experience, it was unanimously clear that the Biodiversity Vision is a fundamental requirement to guide conservation at these scales. Other sessions focused on issues such as governance and leadership of ecoregion programs (particular in the context of the many other institutions and stakeholders that are within all ecoregions), education and community outreach from an advocacy, sustainable funding needed to reach long-term goals. The proceedings will be produced in the next reporting period and will include a full bibliography of tools, communication products and information ecoregions are testing.

“Learning Across Boundaries – Broad-Scale Conservation” Adirondacks, November 2000

Held in the Adirondacks in November, this workshop initiated a fruitful exchange across the GCP and other conservation partners that are exploring conservation at broad scales. Through a mix of presentations and discussions, partners shared approaches on threat analysis and response strategies, monitoring and evaluation, tools for stakeholder collaboration, GIS, etc. Participants left with an enthusiasm to share this learning within their institutions.

A proceedings is drafted up and will be produced in the next quarter (outline included in the Appendix). As an important output of this workshop was group work on how to move us forward in learning from each other, both in terms of approaches, tools as well as collaboration, a few of the key recommendations are summarized below:

- Direct exchanges between organizations. This includes expanding organization training (e.g. threat analyses, monitoring, site and large-scale planning, etc.) to other GCP partners as well as actively promote interchange between sites globally. For instance, WWF and WCS strengthened the idea of linking the WCS landscape species approach with the WWF/IUCN landscape approach. Another example includes building on the successful collaboration between WWF and TNC in developing a Biodiversity Vision for the Bering Sea. The workshop provided an opportunity to further explore applying TNC’s monitoring and evaluation tools to the Bering Sea and plans are already underway

to develop an M&E system that draws on the potentially complementary tools for measuring conservation progress.

- Clear call for more opportunities to exchange ideas on a regular (at least annual) basis. The Nature Conservancy has already expressed a commitment to host a similar workshop next year to pick up on recommendations from this workshop as well as explore new or familiar issues at a deeper level. We are already discussing lessons learned from the Adirondacks workshop with potential themes to follow up on. This will likely be held at a GCP field site.
- Freshwater Broad-Scale Workshop. It was clear from discussions that there are some broad-scale conservation issues unique to areas such as freshwater and marine realms where some partners are just beginning to apply their programs. Following this, interest was sparked to convene a similar workshop specifically targeted at freshwater broad-scale conservation as an emerging area with a distinct need for greater peer exchange. Preliminary discussions are to target this meeting to freshwater experts at a GCP site sometime in the next 6 months (before the broader annual GCP workshop.)
- Overlay map. Building on initial overlays of prioritization done by GCP partners and other conservation initiatives, there was an enthusiastic recommendation to produce a map that visualizes our global priorities with where partners are working to promote better collaboration. This may eventually include a ‘demonstration site’ where partners can collectively contribute their respective expertise.

Communication Products

An important accomplishment of the past 6 months included the production and dissemination of key documents on the theory and practice of ecoregion conservation. These include:

- Workbook on conducting biological assessments and biodiversity visions in ecoregion conservation
- Ecoregion conservation fact sheets (English, Spanish, and French)
- Guide to socioeconomic assessments in ecoregion conservation
- Stakeholder Collaboration – Building Bridges for Conservation
- Distance Learning module on Ecoregion Conservation for the WWF College for Conservation Leadership. This was tested with the first round of participants with an evaluation pending that will be followed by a second cohort of participants.
- Starter Kit designed to provide ecoregional staff with key information resources and contacts to help initiate ecoregion programs is drafted and will be completed in the next

With the exception of a few internal documents, most of these products were also distributed to the broader conservation community.

Preliminary discussions on the internet/intranet site are underway and a strategic plan will be developed in the next reporting period for the development and launch. This will better enable us to extend WWF learning on ecoregion conservation across the conservation community and interested public.

Ecoregional Exchanges

GIS is a fundamental tool in broad-scale conservation providing visual and map-based technology to inform conservation design and implementation. One of the critical needs is to decentralize GIS expertise – whether within WWF or the broader conservation community that relies on these technologists and resource centers. To support this decentralization and exchange within the field, an exchange between ecoregional staff of the Gulf of California and the Meso-American Caribbean Reef was supported. This targeted training was highly valuable for field staff as well as local partners, such as the University, for strengthening capacity. The lessons learned were shared with ECOSNature ecoregions and is a model that will be further encouraged.

1.3 Facilitate innovative grants

Economic Incentives

Following the initial workshop in the Atlantic Forests on economic incentives and tools in ecoregion conservation, a second workshop was held in Bali with a focus on marine ecoregions such as the Sulu Sulawesi Seas. This workshop successfully achieved the primary aims for WWF staff and partners to gain sufficient understanding of economic issues, problems and approaches to be able to identify their precise needs in terms of expertise and to assess the relevance and appropriateness of the services being offered. The results will be published in a workshop report and included in discussions with other expertise in conservation finance within WWF and other GCP partners.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Many of the ECOSNature ecoregions are in the early stages of implementation and formulating approaches for measuring progress towards conservation goals. In addition to exchanges such as in the Bering Sea (with TNC, see actions from NY workshop), deeper work will be done with ecoregions such as the Gulf of California which is potentially the furthest along in developing an ecoregional M&E system. Working with the lessons from last year, discussions are underway to further develop this system building in participation by other GCP partners and WWF ecoregional staff. In addition to developing an approach for monitoring at the ecoregional scale, the development of this approach includes rolling up learning on indicators to even broader scales to feed into work now being done to measure ecoregional conservation progress at a global level (e.g. informing the Living Planet Index and other measures).

Climate change and marine ecoregions

Several meetings with TNC were conducted to confirm a collaborative commitment to developing a proposal and seek funding from a variety of sources for a program addressing vulnerability and adaptation strategies to global climate change on marine ecoregions. The Sulu Sulawesi Seas is taking a lead role in this and will continue pursue collaborative possibilities.

Global Trends

An initial draft of trends in key agribusiness commodities that impact (or will impact) ecoregions (e.g. banana, oil palm, soy bean, cocoa, coffee, corn, cotton, shrimp) was completed and is undergoing internal review. Pending completion, these analyses will be targeted to specific ecoregions as well as provide input into discussions with other conservation organizations that are exploring impacts and potential opportunities with global economic trends.

1.4 WWF Bolivia assist in establishment and management of the Enterprise for the Americas (EAI) Foundation

As a means of establishing sustained financing for biodiversity conservation in Bolivia (which includes six Global 200 ecoregions: Southwest Amazon, Pantanal, Andean Yungas, Chiquitano dry forest, Cerrado woodlands, and Central Andean Dry Puna), WWF is working with P.U.M.A. (Fundacion de Proteccion y Uso Sostenible del Medio Ambiente) to establish the EAI. The primary goal is to achieve high standards of transparency, efficiency and accountability in the establishment and management of foundation funds for biodiversity conservation. Specific objectives include:

- Establish and implement financial management procedures including financial planning and fundraising
- Develop and implement the EAI Foundation program including long-term strategic planning, project approval, monitoring and evaluation procedures and prioritization methodologies to increase the conservation impact and strategic focus of the Foundation's funding
- Implement external communications, outreach and public relations development of Board Members and Executives in all aspects of Foundation planning and management. to strengthen confidence in the foundation of the and inform potential beneficiaries of the new management, focus and procedures.

Summary.

- After a year recruiting for a full time Technical Advisor WWF has not been able to identify a qualified candidate. It has therefore been decided that during the second year of the project WWF will assign a staff person part-time to the project and with the assistance of the Technical Working Group and Board will implement short-term consultancies to meet technical assistance needs to keep the process moving forward.

- In the absence of a full-time Technical Advisor, the Country Representative for Bolivia supervised the development and implementation of the consultancies and travelled frequently to La Paz to work with the EAI Technical Working Group (Ministry of Sustainable Development, EAI staff, USAID and WWF). It has been a very busy period for meetings as the Technical Working Group oversaw 1) integration of conclusions from Ruth Norris's and Jose Antonio Uzquiano's consultancy, 2) the work of developing the legal documents and accompanying the process of legalization and 3) the work of producing the operational manuals. The Technical Working Group also formed the Provisional Board and accompanied them orienting them in their role to oversee the establishment of the Foundation PUMA.
- The by-laws, regulations and act of constitution for the newly established EAI Fund were finalized. These documents are now being processed through the proper legal channels to legalize the new Foundation which should be by January 15, 2001.
- A provisional Work Plan for the next few months was developed by the Provisional Board and the Working Group to define steps for finalizing the selection of the new Board, the legalization process and begin transition of EAI operations to the Foundation PUMA. It is hoped that the new Board will be in place by February of 2001 after which a detailed Work Plan for 2001 will be developed.
- The consultants reports have served as the basis to defining the new structure of the Foundation and outlining the process of selection for the new Board. The Minister of Sustainable Development and Planning – one of the key founding members - has changed twice over the last 6 months and these consultants reports have helped to orient the new Ministers and their advisors. Also, the outgoing Board for the EAI Fund have also been informed of the proposed changes via the consultants work and have been supportive of the transition to a new Foundation.
- The procedures and manuals for Foundation administration were completed December 15, 2000. Once hired, the new Board and the new General Manager will work with the manuals to test and finalize the procedures based on practice. In the meantime, the manuals have begun to be useful in outlining the selection procedure and job descriptions for the new Board Members and staff.

Activity Number	Activity Title	<i>Status*</i>	Page number for more
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			information
1.1	Establishment and management of the EAI Foundation in an effort to achieve high standards of transparency, efficiency and accountability.	On-Track and Delayed	

Benchmark Number	Benchmark/Output	Status*
1.4	Strategic technical advice provided in the establishment and development of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Foundation (EAI) in Bolivia to support Ecoregion Conservation in six Global 200 Ecoregions.	On-track and Delayed
1.1	Legal documents completed and now in the process of being legalized	On-track
1.2	Operational manuals completed and approved by Technical Working Group. The manuals have defined the process of Board selection which has been initiated.	On-track
	Board structure and responsibilities established.	On-track

Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Key management issues (discussion of problems, delays, shortfalls, and proposed solutions)

The formation of the Foundation PUMA is going as planned in terms as the steps involved with its formation and development. The process of Foundation formation follows a logical order and if steps are skipped or implemented prematurely the final functioning of the Foundation could be compromised. When and how to involve key actors is very important. Perhaps for this reason the process has just been slower than planned.

LEGALIZATION: The bureaucracy involved with legalizing an institution and changing its legal status is unpredictable and lengthy. The legal documents were approved by all, the necessary signatures were collected and the documents submitted to the government in November and it is planned that they will be finalized in mid-January.

KEY ACTOR PARTICIPATION IN TRANSITION: It also has been necessary to spend a considerable amount of time keeping the many actors involved informed and supportive of the process of change. The Minister of Sustainable

Development and Planning that represents one of the two founders has changed twice over the last six months which has made it necessary to orient new Ministers and advisors. Several meetings for the outgoing Board for the EAI Fund were organized to inform them of the transition and solicit their support and many meetings were held to form and inform the Provisional Board of their role and accompany them in their tasks. The changes have made some key politicians and public servants anxious over the process and it has been necessary to take the time to inform everyone involved and maintain support.

BOARD FORMATION: The formation of the new Board has also taken longer than expected due to the fact that candidates that represent the rural sector were not nominated via the nationwide call for nominations. Therefore, it has been necessary to research potential candidates and make direct invitations. All of this has taken more time than anticipated but it is hoped the new Board will be selected by February 2001.

FUND ADMINISTRATION: As soon as the new Board is in place and the Foundation has been legalized the recruitment for the General Manager will begin, the Foundation will move to a new office and funds will be transferred to the Foundation account. In the meantime, the EAI staff will be maintained for the first quarter of 2001 within FONAMA.

WORK PLAN FOR 2001: The General Manager and new Board will be asked to prepare the Work Plan for what remains of 2001. The Work Plan will include plans for technical assistance that will be supported by this grant. Throughout this process WWF will continue to play a key role in the Technical Working Group. It is planned that the new Board and Foundation PUMA staff will then replace the Technical Working Group role.