

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: The International Center for Journalists

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Building Awareness of Conservation in the Caucasus

Implementation Partners for this Project: Caucasus Center for Journalists, WWF

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): October 1, 2006-September 30, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): Oct. 29, 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

ICFJ and our lead trainer, Gesine Dornblueth, believe we made progress in sometimes difficult circumstances. We carried out our proposed plan with only minor adjustments. We kept working in the region despite the hostilities between Georgia and Russia and the sectarian turmoil in the North Caucasus states. And having spent less than we planned in the first two years, we added more training field trips and a third contest to extend the impact of the project in 2009. We are thankful for the cooperation and help of WWF experts, who were extremely valuable in fleshing out conservation issues in each country in the region.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *Enter project purpose from the Logical Framework worksheet of the approved project proposal.*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<p>Purpose-level: We aim to foster more and better coverage of conservation issues in the news media in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and southern Russia. The coverage should stimulate discourse on the species at risk, the need for better management of protected areas, and the importance of creating new protected areas and better controlling ecologically destructive human activities.</p>	<p>We clearly stimulated more coverage of conservation issues than would have occurred without our program. We toured protected areas in each country and our participants wrote about managing them and disruptive activities such as mining and logging. Economic, political and military turmoil in the region, however, tended to overshadow such issues.</p>
<p>1.1 Entries in the Biodiversity Reporting Awards contests. Stories on public discussion of protected areas management and control of destructive activities.</p>	<p>Several of our training participants won prizes in our contests and submitted stories on subjects we covered in reporting field trips with trainers, such as forest fire management, bird-watching tourism, and rare species in need of protection.</p>

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

The program was able to help journalists improve their coverage of conservation of biodiversity and other environmental issues. This was more successful in Georgia and Armenia, where interest in the environment is significant, than in the North Caucasus of Russia and Azerbaijan, where environmental interest and discussion is lower. Entries in our Biodiversity Reporting Awards contests reflected this dichotomy, as Georgian and Armenian journalists dominated both the entries and the awards. Georgian stories appear to have had some influence on the government leasing of timber land for harvest.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

In one case we felt journalists went astray. In leading a field trip to mining areas of southeastern Armenia, we found Armenian journalists eager to write about fears that uranium mining would kill many local residents. We tried to alert reporters to evidence that uranium mining can be done with little risk, but the journalists focused on fears, regardless of whether they were supported by facts.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs: Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<p>Output 1: Organize and conduct two, four-day training workshops. One in northern Georgia, probably Kazbegi, would include about eight journalists from Georgia, eight from Armenia and four from Russia. The second workshop in Azerbaijan, probably near Shagdag National Park, would include about ten journalists from Azerbaijan, four from Georgia and six from neighboring parts of Russia, including Dagestan. The workshops will include training on journalism techniques and conservation issues, at least one field trip and hands-on practice reporting conservation stories for publication or broadcast.</p>	<p>We held the Georgian workshop at Borjomi and in the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park for nine Georgian journalists and seven Armenian journalists. The Russian-Georgian border was closed, so no Russians could attend. The Azerbaijan workshop was held in Zagatala's Ice Hotel, the headquarters of the Zagatala Reserve and nearby natural areas. Attending journalists included seven from Azerbaijan, five from Russia and four from Georgia. Each workshop included field trips and hands-on reporting practice on conservation subjects.</p>
<p><i>1.1 Training completed for some 20 journalists in the Republic of Georgia and another 20 in Azerbaijan leading to published or broadcast stories by at least half of them</i></p>	<p>Training included 16 journalists in Georgia and 16 in Azerbaijan. Our contest for coverage of conservation got 56 entries in 2007, more than half from Georgia.</p>
<p>Output 2: Coaching by one international environmental journalist and one veteran journalist from the region. They would coach Russian reporters in Azerbaijan and Georgia after each of the workshops. We also plan to send the our lead trainer to work with local trainers in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia to lead field trips, seminars and coaching for reporters and editors during the two weeks after the second workshop in 2007 and in those countries as well as Russia during 2008, before and after the ceremony for Biodiversity Reporting Awards (see Output 3).</p>	<p>In 2007, we hosted a seminar on forestry in Tbilisi, Georgia, and our lead trainer led a reporting field trip to Lake Sevan in Armenia, and to Nabran and Gusar, Azerbaijan. In 2008, she led journalists on reporting ventures to the site of the Sochi Olympic Games, Shirvan National Park near Baku and from Yerevan to mines and parks near Kapan and Qajaran, Armenia. Each field trip included coaching on how to cover conservation issues.</p>
<p><i>2.1 Continued interest in conservation issues, reflected in stories produced and entered in the Biodiversity Reporting Awards contest; 20 entries in year two and 24 in year three.</i></p>	<p>The contest entries rose from 56 in 2007 to 58 in 2008.</p>
<p>Output 3: Conduct a contest in years two and three</p>	<p>The contests were organized, judged and the</p>

of the project for reporting on conservation of biodiversity, open to journalists from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. First prize--\$1,000; second prize--\$500; third prize--\$200, along with certificates and plaques. Entries will be printed stories or transcripts of stories from electronic media. Winners will be transported to a capital in the region for a ceremony to confer their awards.	prizes awarded, not just in 2007 and 2008, but also in 2009. We held award ceremonies and receptions with all the honored winners in Tbilisi in 2007 and in both Tbilisi and Yerevan in 2008.
3.1 <i>Winners and their stories will be announced on the Conservation International Biodiversity Awards Web site: http://www.biodiversityreporting.org/. Those and other well-reported stories will be displayed on the Web site managed by REC Caucasus.</i>	Winning stories were displayed on the Web site of the Biodiversity Reporting Awards, operated by Conservation International.
Output 4: Conduct a contest in year four of the project for reporting on conservation of biodiversity, open to journalists from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. First prize--\$1,000; second prize--\$500; third prize--\$200, along with certificates and plaques. Entries will be printed stories or transcripts of stories from electronic media, all translated into Russian. Winners will be sent their awards and cash.	Going beyond our proposed plan, we organized an additional contest in 2009. It attracted 32 entries, which was somewhat lower than previous years because we had no training under way in this added year. The prizes were sent to the winners by mail.
4.1 <i>Winners and their stories will be announced on the Conservation International Biodiversity Awards Web site: http://www.biodiversityreporting.org/.</i>	Winning entries were posted on the Web site of the Biodiversity Reporting Awards.

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

We were able to carry out the plan with a few adjustments. The closure of the Georgian-Russian border and the war between the two countries made it more difficult to bring Russians to Georgia or for our trainers to work in Russia. The war forced us to delay and reschedule our training programs in Georgia in 2008. Nevertheless, we were able to conduct useful training in Georgia and Azerbaijan in both years for slightly smaller groups than we originally proposed. We also conducted training twice in Armenia and once in Russia.

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

All outputs were achieved, and some were exceeded, though the reporters participating in our first round of workshops numbered 16 rather than the 20 we had proposed.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

We were not disrupting habitat nor social relationships.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

Conducting an environmental awareness project like this is difficult in the midst of conflict and in some countries with limited freedom of expression. We believe that we helped Georgian and Armenian reporters become more skilled at reporting on conservation issues. We had only an occasional success in the North Caucasus states of Russia and little success in Azerbaijan. Any project to build media skills needs relative stability, peace and freedom to report facts.

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

We would not fault the project design. The project could not have anticipated the Georgian/Russian strife. It might have omitted Azerbaijan from the training on grounds that civil society there is less interested, but that would be hard to justify while the larger CEPF program was trying to build a conservation program in that country.

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

We regret that we failed to achieve better integration with REC Caucasus. They did some of their own training programs, but showed no interest in meshing theirs with ours. And we got so involved in our own planning that we didn't try hard enough to get them involved in our programs.

VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

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

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

We had no donors to this project other than CEPF.

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

We have neither plans nor money to continue the project, although we have a longstanding relationship with journalism training organizations in Georgia and Armenia,

and have conducted other programs in Azerbaijan. We intend to watch for opportunities to do more work in these countries, and will include conservation issues where possible.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the three years in which we trained journalists and ran contests, we observed slow but steady progress toward better coverage of conservation issues. Our lead trainer, Gesine Dornblueth, noted the following changes:

- journalists grew more competent in using and translating scientific words into common language;
- the number of good articles about biodiversity in the regions went up, especially in West Georgia, which last year produced an excellent story about fishes in danger;
- Armenia's environmental NGOs worked closely with media to call attention to environmental problems in mining, protected areas and water quality.

Although environmental reporting is relatively young in this region, we are impressed with the progress it has made in Armenia and Georgia. To be sure, we saw some weakening of fact-based reporting in Georgia after the war with Russia. The Georgian government and media are quick to blame Russia for ecological problems like forest fires rather than finding facts and potential solutions. Nevertheless, both Georgia and Armenia are growing an effective corps of journalists to cover conservation and the environment.

Azerbaijan and the Russian Caucasus states have a long way to go to catch up with Georgia and Armenia on environmental reporting, but some individuals in Russia and Azerbaijan offer promise. We would recommend more training programs in Georgia and Armenia and targeted work with small groups or individuals in Russia and Azerbaijan.

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

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