



EVALUATION SUMMARY



6th PHASE OF THE SMALL INITIATIVES PROGRAM – PPI 6

COUNTRY: WEST AFRICA AND CENTRAL AFRICA

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KEY DATA ON FFEM SUPPORT

Amount of FFEM funding: €3,000,000

Project grant date: July 1st, 2021

Duration : 4 years

Project name: 6th phase of the Small Initiative Program – PPI6

Project number: CZZ 3228

Context

Launched in 2006, the Small Initiatives Programme (PPI), funded by FFEM and implemented by the French Committee of IUCN, supports African civil society in its biodiversity conservation actions. Phase 6 (2021–2025) is in line with previous developments, with a consolidation of the strategic positioning around three levers: project financing, organizational capacity building, and enhancement of initiatives in West Africa, Central Africa and on the Atlantic coast.

Participants and operating procedures

The programme is managed by the IUCN French Committee, in conjunction with its technical and financial partners, and implemented by a committed team on a human scale, supported by 4 regional coordinators ensuring the identification of partners, project monitoring and local support for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The projects supported are selected after calls for proposals and evaluated by an independent committee. For this 6th phase, 71 projects led by 59 African organizations

(including a network of CSOs) were supported in 18 countries, with funding provided by the program ranging from €20,000 to €70,000.

OBJECTIVES

Strengthen the impact and advocacy of African civil society organizations in biodiversity conservation, by supporting local projects, consolidating their organizational capacities and promoting their visibility and networking.

Specific objectives:

Fund relevant local initiatives, strengthen the structuring of emerging CSOs, experiment with innovative conservation approaches, and promote collective learning and network dynamics at the regional level.

TESTED INNOVATION

The PPI program targets small African civil society organizations that have little or no access to international funding channels. It is distinguished by an integrated approach combining flexible funding, personalized support and organizational strengthening, based on a posture of trust and a strong ability to adapt to local realities.



EVALUATION RESULTS

Relevance

The PPI 6 presents a strong fit with international priorities and the specific needs of African CSOs. Its flexible, contextualized and tailor-made approach allows for a refined and differentiated response to conservation issues in complex contexts. In particular, the diversity of funding windows and a particular attention to organizational development were assets of PPI 6 to meet the diversity of needs of CSOs. The implementation of FADO (Organisational Development Support Fund) was a significant and highly relevant innovation.

Coherence

The program relies on strong internal coherence between its components (funding, support-strengthening) and on a facilitation posture that promotes links between actors, scales, and territories. The catalyst role of the PPI has increased during this phase 6, and is valued by all stakeholders. The positioning of the PPI in relation to other support mechanisms for biodiversity conservation is illustrated by its very good complementarity.

Effectiveness

The PPI 6 far exceeded its initial objectives, with 71 projects funded (compared to 40 initially planned), an estimated success rate of 87% and a strong capacity building of more than 130 CSOs. Support, coaching and networking were particularly popular, while communication, monitoring and evaluation remain perfectible, especially in terms of prioritization and simplification of indicators. The majority of supported CSOs reported they have met or exceeded the objectives set in their funding agreements, whether for ecological or socio-economic indicators.

ADDED VALUE OF THE FFEM

With this 6th phase, the FFEM has now been supporting for 20 years a unique intermediation mechanism linking local, regional and international scales, promoting experimentation, trust and organizational innovation at the service of the conservation of the African biodiversity, by and for local communities.

“The strength of the Small Initiatives Programme is local, tailor-made support. Each organization receives its own support”

Representative of a civil society organization benefiting from the Programme

Find details of the project sheet by scanning the QR Code



Efficiency

The ratio between the resources mobilized and the results achieved is generally satisfactory. The PPI 6 has made it possible to finance a significant number of projects with a small team and great operational agility. However, an improvement in administrative and financial deadlines would allow for greater responsiveness of the PPI.

Impact

The effects of the program are significant, both on the trajectories of partner CSOs and on local conservation dynamics. The PPI sustainably strengthens CSOs' capacities for action, their institutional credibility and their impact on the ground, while promoting the emergence of collective dynamics and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Viability/sustainability

The posture of trust, the continuity of support and the increase in organizational skills contribute to the sustainability of the program's effects. The gradual reduction of support for the most robust partners promotes their empowerment and the reallocation of resources to new actors.

However, in an unstable and uncertain context, the sustainability of the dynamics engaged will depend on the program's ability to diversify its financial partnerships, and to adjust its level of ambition to the available means and to organize smoothly the exit of CSOs that have become more autonomous, while maintaining solid support for emerging structures.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase 6 confirms the relevance of the PPI model, based on local support, flexible and adapted to local realities. The integrated approach (financing, methodological support, networking) produces structuring effects, while evolving to simplify its tools and strengthen its intermediation role. Beyond the results, phase 6 highlighted several challenges that the program has begun to address but will need to pursue further:

- Lighten administrative and financial procedures in order to maintain the quality of support while meeting a growing demand, strengthen the prioritization of beneficiaries, and clarify the communication and influence strategy to better structure the valorization and advocacy actions of the program,
- Strengthen inter-partner exchange spaces, support regional dynamics, and further structure partnerships with networks, institutions, and donors in order to amplify the long-term effects.
- Develop the networking function as a central strategic lever of phase 7.