

Global Overview

Everyone depends on Earth's ecosystems and their life-sustaining benefits, such as clean air, fresh water and healthy soils. The **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)** is a global leader in enabling civil society to participate in and benefit from conserving some of the world's most critical ecosystems.

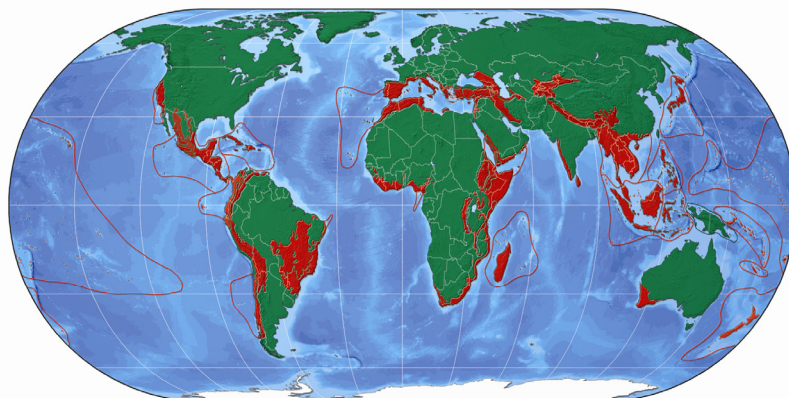
CEPF provides grants for nongovernmental and private sector organizations to help protect biodiversity hotspots, Earth's most biologically rich and endangered regions.

The convergence of critical areas for conservation with millions of people who are impoverished and highly dependent on healthy ecosystems for their survival is more evident in the hotspots than anywhere else.

Enabling a stronger voice, influence and action by civil societies is the hallmark of our approach. CEPF investments equip civil society groups to conserve their environment and influence decisions that affect lives, livelihoods and, ultimately, the global environment.

CEPF investments:

- Target biodiversity hotspots in developing countries for maximum impact.
- Are guided by regional investment strategies developed with stakeholders.
- Go directly to civil society groups to build this vital constituency for conservation alongside governmental partners.
- Create working alliances among diverse groups, combining unique capacities and eliminating duplication of efforts.
- Achieve tangible results through an ever-expanding network of partners working together toward shared conservation goals.



■ Biodiversity Hotspots

THE PARTNERSHIP

L'Agence Française de Développement, the French Development Agency, is a financial institution that is at the heart of France's Development Assistance Policy. It supports a wide range of social and economic projects in more than 60 countries.

www.afd.fr

Conservation International is a leader and catalyst in biodiversity conservation, engaging partners in more than 40 countries on four continents to preserve threatened ecosystems. As one of the founding partners, the organization administers the global program through a CEPF Secretariat.

www.conservation.org

The **Global Environment Facility** is the largest source of funding for the global environment. It brings 178 member governments together with leading development institutions and others in support of a common global environmental agenda.

www.thegef.org

The **Government of Japan** is one of the world's largest providers of development assistance for the environment. Japan seeks constructive measures and concrete programs to preserve unique ecosystems that provide people with important benefits and help reduce poverty.

www.env.go.jp/en/

The John D. and Catherine T.

MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grant-making institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals foster lasting improvement in the human condition.

www.macfound.org

The World Bank is the world's largest source of development assistance. It works in more than 100 developing economies to fight poverty and to help people help themselves and their environment.

www.worldbank.org



@ WWF Caucasus Programme Office

The Caucasus Hotspot is one of 34 biodiversity hotspots, the Earth's most biologically rich and endangered regions. The CEPF investment strategy for this hotspot supports conservation of five biodiversity conservation corridors that stretch across six countries.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The hotspots approach to the conservation of ecosystems is a highly targeted strategy for tackling the challenge of biodiversity loss at the global level.

As many hotspots cross national borders, the approach transcends political boundaries and fosters coordination and joint efforts across large landscapes for local and global benefits.

Within the hotspots, CEPF focuses on the highest priorities for conservation: globally threatened and geographically concentrated species, the sites critical for their survival, and the landscapes necessary to maintain ecological and evolutionary processes.

Prior to investment in each hotspot, CEPF determines its niche based on a stakeholder-driven prioritization process that factors in socioeconomic features, threats, and current investments together with the biodiversity science used to determine the conservation targets.

This niche and an investment strategy are detailed in an ecosystem profile for each region. Every grant awarded helps implement a specific strategic direction from the investment strategy, further enabling CEPF to act as a catalyst in aligning and coordinating conservation efforts.

In 2008, CEPF also began implementing a major program to consolidate and sustain gains made possible by its previous investment in selected hotspots.

ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

Strategy development

Civil society groups lead development of CEPF investment strategies. These partners ensure wide participation and transparency to reach consensus on the highest priorities for conservation and CEPF investments. Engaging a rich mix of civil society, governmental partners, and other stakeholders at this early stage has proven to be the foundation for successful implementation and results.

Implementation

Regional implementation teams of civil society groups provide leadership in each of the hotspots. These teams play an instrumental role, helping identify potential partners, providing hands-on assistance to design proposals, and converting the plans in the ecosystem profiles into powerful portfolios. They bring local expertise to the process and broaden our reach and ability to make sound investment decisions.

Results

The NGOs, community groups and other civil society partners we support are the driving force of the program's results. They create and lead strategic projects and, in turn, engage others to maximize conservation impact per dollar spent and foster sustainability. CEPF grant recipients range from farming cooperatives and community associations to local and international NGOs.

IMPACT

CEPF has supported more than 1,340 civil society groups in implementing diverse projects to help conserve biodiversity hotspots.

The program's flexible and agile structure and operations have enabled it to support many community groups and fledgling organizations often outside the reach of traditional funding mechanisms.

An independent evaluation of the global program found projects at the ecosystem level to be strategic and well-selected to form integrated portfolios, with small grants complemented by targeted larger grants.

The evaluators found CEPF grants to civil society groups were particularly effective in the following areas:

- **Protected areas:** Project portfolios in all hotspots have supported expansion, consolidation, and improved planning and management of protected areas.
- **Species conservation:** CEPF grants have established research and educational projects at the local level and have supported community organizations in participatory monitoring activities to prevent species extinctions.
- **Capacity building and training:** Grants to the national offices of international NGOs have helped provide formal training as well as employment for promising local individuals who represent the next generation of national conservation leaders.
- **Community development and poverty mitigation:** A significant number of grants have provided the basis for improving incomes and economic well-being of poor communities.
- **Building conservation into development planning:** Grants have equipped decisionmakers and planners with tools and knowledge to harmonize conservation with economic development.
- **Private sector:** Several hotspots have achieved significant conservation contributions from national and international companies in private sector industries due to CEPF-supported projects.
- **Multinational hotspots:** CEPF has demonstrated that conservation planning and implementation can take place on a regional, multi-country scale.
- **Long-term conservation financing:** CEPF grants have helped establish conservation trust funds and leverage partner support.

“This innovative model fills a unique niche in international biodiversity conservation and is being implemented by a very professional global team plus partners who have made excellent early progress toward their long-term goals. We have no hesitation in recommending that the donor partners continue funding the program and seeking further expansion opportunities.”

- Report of the Independent
Evaluation of the Critical
Ecosystem Partnership Fund,
January 2006

CEPF QUICK FACTS

Founded: 2000

First grants awarded: 2001

Hotspot strategies implemented: 18

Countries and territories covered in those hotspots: 51

Civil society groups supported: 1,340+

Committed grants: \$110.5 million

Leveraged funds: \$131 million+

Detailed impact examples include:

- A landmark agreement between Bolivian and Peruvian national park authorities for transnational collaboration in managing protected areas with shared borders.
- 86 communities in the buffer zones of Southern Mesoamerica's major protected areas and biological corridors trained in sustainable agriculture techniques.
- Three new laws in Liberia increasing protected areas by 60 percent and instituting significant reforms to the nation's natural resource conservation policies.
- Biodiversity guidelines incorporated into industry-wide system for South African wine production through a pioneering partnership between the wine industry and the conservation sector. Participants have also set aside land for conservation equivalent to the total vineyard footprint in the Cape winelands.
- Redirection of a transnational highway originally planned to cut through Armenia's Shikahogh Reserve, which shelters the nation's only pristine oak forest and important populations of globally threatened species.

LOOKING AHEAD

CEPF is now expanding the global program with its partners based on a rich mix of experience and lessons learned for the benefit of all.

The overarching goal is to strengthen the involvement and effectiveness of civil society in conservation and management of globally significant biodiversity.

We will achieve this by providing strategic assistance to NGOs, community groups and other sectors of civil society to support:

- strengthened protection and management of biodiversity within selected hotspots and critical ecosystems;
- increased local and national capacity to integrate biodiversity conservation into development and landscape planning; and
- expanded and improved monitoring and learning to demonstrate biodiversity impact and enable adaptive management and replication.



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CEPF investments in the Mesoamerica Hotspot (top) enabled farmers like Trino Ureña Granados (bottom) to farm sustainably and benefit from Costa Rica's innovative payment for environmental services scheme.

LEARN MORE

For more information about CEPF and how to apply for grants, please visit www.cepf.net.

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