



Western Ghats & Sri Lanka Hotspot

Western Ghats Region

CEPF INVESTMENT PLANNED
\$4.5 million

QUICK FACTS

The region performs important hydrological and watershed functions, sustaining the livelihoods of the approximately 245 million people who live in the peninsular Indian states that receive most of their water supply from rivers originating in the Western Ghats.

Analyses reveal the presence of 332 globally threatened species and thousands of endemic species in the Western Ghats.

The forests of the Western Ghats are some of the best representatives of non-equatorial evergreen forests in the world.

Experts estimate that between 1920 and 1990, 40 percent of the region's natural vegetation was converted to coffee and tea plantations.

The Western Ghats of southwestern India and the highlands of southwestern Sri Lanka, separated by 400 kilometers, are strikingly similar in their geology, climate, and evolutionary history. Together, they form one of the most densely populated of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots.

The hotspot is extraordinarily rich in species, especially plants, found nowhere else. However, its forests face tremendous population pressure and have been dramatically impacted by demands for timber and agricultural land.

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) investments will focus on the Western Ghats region, which stretches across an area of 180,000 square kilometers along the west coast of India. The Western Ghats region comprises less than 6 percent of the total land area of India, yet contains more than 30 percent of all plant, fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species found there.

THREATS

While once an area of dense forest, today only one-third of the Western Ghats' natural vegetation remains in pristine condition. Further, many existing forests are highly fragmented and facing increasing degradation. The significant deforestation and, consequently, habitat loss can mostly be attributed to a burgeoning human population and its demand for agricultural land, infrastructure development, and economic growth.

CEPF investments in the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka Hotspot (right) will focus on the Western Ghats region, which extends along the west coast of India.



Moreover, poor coordination among the various government agencies managing the region's natural resources coupled with a lack of engagement of civil society in biodiversity management and conservation efforts has led to numerous conflicts and limited effectiveness.

CEPF INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The council of donors that governs CEPF approved a \$4.5-million, 5-year investment strategy for the Western Ghats in April 2007. CEPF investment in this region will begin with the selection of a regional implementation team.

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology & the Environment developed the CEPF strategy in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society–India Programme, the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, and with the technical support of the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International. The process also included extensive consultation with experts and stakeholders in the region.

CEPF will provide support to existing protected area efforts and seek to generate momentum for biodiversity conservation adjacent to those protected areas.

Conservation of five large landscapes—the Anamalai, Malnad-Kodagu, Mysore-Nilgiri, Periyar-Agasthyamalai, and Sahyadri-Konkan biodiversity conservation corridors—and 80 key biodiversity areas within them will be emphasized.

The key biodiversity areas are important not only as habitats for Endangered species such as the Nilgiri tahr, the lion-tailed macaque, and the terrestrial toad *Bufo koynayensis*.

Priorities for investment include the globally threatened flora and fauna in the Western Ghats, which are represented by 229 plant species, 31 mammal species, 15 bird species, 52 amphibian species, four reptile species, and one fish species. Of the total of 332 globally threatened species in the Western Ghats, 55 are Critically Endangered, 148 are Endangered, and 129 are Vulnerable.

Strategic Funding Directions

CEPF investments in this region will be guided by three strategic directions and related investment priorities, a full description of which can be found in the ecosystem profile on www.cepf.net. Each project must be linked to one of the strategic directions to be approved for funding.



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Key biodiversity areas can be linked to create corridors enabling movement of species such as elephants and tigers.

ABOUT US

CEPF is a joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International (CI), the Global Environmental Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. As one of the founding partners, CI administers the global program.

CEPF provides strategic assistance to nongovernmental organizations, community groups and other civil society partners to help safeguard biodiversity hotspots—the biologically richest and most threatened regions on Earth. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in conserving the hotspots.