

# Action + Assessment + Evolution

A summary of evaluations of the  
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund



# About CEPF

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a global biodiversity fund that empowers people to be good stewards of the planet, so that they and future generations continue to benefit from its life-sustaining resources, such as biodiversity, clean air, fresh water, a stable climate and healthy soils.

The Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank.

The partners believe that civil society is uniquely positioned to protect some of Earth's most biologically rich yet threatened ecosystems—biodiversity hotspots. CEPF provides grants to nongovernmental and private sector organizations so they can conserve these critical ecosystems. Our grantee partners range from small farming cooperatives and community associations to private sector partners, and national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The investments are even more meaningful because these regions are home to millions of people who are impoverished and highly dependent on natural resources.

Our grants:

- Target biodiversity hotspots in developing and transitional countries, and address many of the 2020 biodiversity targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity—also known as the Aichi Targets.
- Are guided by regional investment strategies — ecosystem profiles — developed with local stakeholders and endorsed by our donors.
- Go directly to civil society groups to build this vital constituency for conservation alongside governmental partners. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to implement the conservation strategy developed in each ecosystem profile.
- Create working alliances among diverse groups, combining unique capacities and eliminating duplication of efforts.
- Achieve results through an ever-expanding network of partners working together toward shared goals.

For more information, please visit [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net)

# Introduction

Since 2000, CEPF has been channeling the funding of its visionary donor partners to communities and nongovernmental and private sector organizations that strategically support biodiversity hotspots—the world’s most diverse yet threatened ecosystems.

**After supporting more than 1,900 grantees in more than 80 developing and transitional countries and territories, with more than \$175 million in grants, CEPF and its grantees have achieved a great deal in terms of protecting vital ecosystems and the human well-being they support.**

- 12.7 million hectares of protected areas created or expanded
- 31 million hectares of key biodiversity areas with strengthened management
- 3.8 million hectares of production landscapes with strengthened management
- More than 580 communities in developing and transitional countries benefiting from CEPF-funded projects.
- \$346 million in additional funding leveraged by CEPF investments

We also have learned a lot from both our successes and our failures. The results are reflected in the multiple evaluations of CEPF conducted over the years by independent experts and our own donors. A compilation of their key findings, organized by theme, and our responses to them, are on the pages that follow. Evaluations referenced in this brochure are:

- World Bank Mid-Term Evaluation 2003
- “Report of the Independent Evaluation of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund” by Michael P. Wells, Lisa M. Curran and Seemin Qayum, 2006
- Global Environment Facility Implementation Completion and Results Report, 2007
- Evaluation by David Olson, Conservation Earth, 2010
- World Bank Mid-Term Review, 2011
- Evaluation by l’Agence Française de Développement (the French Development Agency), 2014



*Hibiscus Aethiopicus*, © Nikki Brighton

# Supporting Biodiversity

**Biodiversity hotspots in developing and transitional countries are the target of CEPF's funding. Through grants to the nongovernmental and private sector organizations that make up "civil society," CEPF promotes the conservation of unique and highly threatened biodiversity and ecosystems. CEPF is the only global biodiversity fund supporting conservation through funding to civil society.**

## Evaluation Findings

The last decade of work by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) represents the most significant response of our species to date to stop the hemorrhaging of our planet's biodiversity.

The single most significant contribution of CEPF has been to provide much needed conservation attention to many of the highest priority biodiversity regions around the world that, for one reason or another, had not received adequate attention from national governments nor galvanized the sustained interest of the international conservation community.

CEPF's global program has targeted substantial resources for conservation action towards regions with pronounced concentrations of threatened species .... Focusing conservation attention in these extinction-prone areas constitutes a unique and cost-effective approach for saving global biodiversity.

CEPF's unwavering emphasis on species and protected areas as the foundation for protecting biodiversity through a tumultuous decade of shifting conservation focus and intensifying biodiversity loss represents a major contribution to the global conservation agenda. Indeed, CEPF's focus on species conservation, with sizeable and sustained investments in many important regions and direct action for multiple species, made the global program the most significant champion for species over the last decade.

Thus, the incremental benefit of CEPF to the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) 2010 goal to achieve a "significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss" has been tremendous for this contribution alone. An improved outlook for a conservatively extrapolated 55,000 threatened species around the world can be attributed directly to CEPF programs, with many more vulnerable and, as yet, stable species benefitting as well.

The [supervision] mission confirmed the findings of the recent independent evaluation of CEPF that the second phase of CEPF that started in 2008 has been very effective at supporting conservation efforts in multiple regions with pronounced concentrations of threatened species and harboring globally significant biodiversity and ecosystems.



Olson  
2010



Olson  
2010



Olson  
2010



Olson  
2010



Olson  
2010



World  
Bank  
2011

# Recommendations

Representation of distinct biogeographic assemblages in ecosystem profiles, facilitated by analyzing habitat types and distinct sub-regions within hotspots, can improve priorities for threatened plants, fungi, and invertebrates that make up the vast majority of species.

Olson  
2010

## Response:

- CEPF develops priorities for its funding via the ecosystem profiling process, during which profiling teams not only consult with local stakeholders and scientific and conservation experts, but also assess the biodiversity hotspot using the key biodiversity area methodology for prioritizing areas for conservation action (Langhammer et al, 2008). The lack of available data for certain taxonomic groups such as plants and invertebrates makes it extremely difficult for CEPF to address this recommendation. In those hotspots where data is available, CEPF has gone beyond traditional conservation efforts to include action, for example, on freshwater species, as it has done in the Eastern Afrotropical Hotspot.



Malachite Sunbird, © Scott Macaskill

# Building Civil Society

CEPF's mission is to empower civil society—nongovernmental and private sector organizations—so they can be strong and capable stewards of the world's biodiversity hotspots. CEPF has supported more than 1,900 organizations in more than 80 countries.

## Evaluation Findings

The most significant direct impacts from grant making to civil society have been: (i) capacity building among local and national conservation NGOs; (ii) contributions to extending and strengthening protected area networks; (iii) broadening environmental awareness through effective communications; (iv) enabling local, national and international partnerships to support biodiversity conservation; (v) effective advocacy by grantee organizations in connection with infrastructure and other development projects; and (vi) contributions to sustainable financing for conservation. The portfolios also contain a significant number of projects that combine community development and livelihood opportunities with biodiversity conservation, thereby contributing to poverty mitigation.

Wells  
2006

CEPF support has enabled civil society to contribute to a major expansion and improvement in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in the targeted hotspots. ... Prominent and strategically vital partnerships have also been developed with local and national governments, including the agencies responsible for conservation as well as closely related sectors such as forestry and agriculture.

GEF  
2007

Without CEPF's intervention, it is highly unlikely that other conservation programs in existence a decade ago could have, or would have stepped in to jump-start meaningful conservation in many important regions, due to investment risk and uncertainty.

Olson  
2010

A strong message from the field is that a major impact of CEPF, perhaps the best according to many, has been the establishment of forums for multiple stakeholders to discuss, strategize and negotiate conservation and natural resource use issues. Many indigenous groups and local communities have felt they offer a rare opportunity to have their voice heard on many issues. New alliances and forums for discussion provide a vehicle for civil society groups to engage government and industry on a regular basis and establish a formal process to share perspectives, achieve consensus, and negotiate solutions. Every CEPF region has established such networks, tailored to the particular features of each society, culture, and conservation community.

Olson  
2010

CEPF activities have improved biodiversity protection on the ground, but the real value in the global program has been to improve the potential for conservation effectiveness of civil society, and increase the probability that their activities will translate into future gains of protection and improved management over coming decades.

Fostering partnerships that both achieve their goals and are long-lasting is a difficult task, yet CEPF has nonetheless made significant progress on this target, indicating that with the right conditions, CEPF is an effective mechanism for fostering partnerships.

It brings significant and targeted support, worldwide, to organizations of civil society, on the basis of specific criteria (hotspots, ecosystems profiles), and thus offers a comprehensive response to the loss of biodiversity on the planet.



Olson  
2010



World  
Bank  
2011



AFD  
2014

## Recommendations

CEPF would benefit from well-defined ‘visions’ for the structure, relationships, capacity, and effectiveness of a hotspot’s conservation community, particularly the civil society component, which would be similar in nature and function as the biological visions that are presently developed in ecosystem profiles.

### Response:

- CEPF is currently piloting the development of new “long-term visions” for civil society in regions where it invests. These visions define the conditions a hotspot’s nongovernmental environment sector needs to achieve for CEPF to consider it self-sustaining and no longer in need of CEPF support.

**The mission recommends that CEPF strengthen the exchanges between hotspots by creating a multi-regional grant to facilitate annual RIT [regional implementation team] and grantee interactions.**

### Response:

- The CEPF Secretariat held its first exchange program for its regional implementation teams—the organizations working in the biodiversity hotspots that help manage CEPF’s investments—in December 2013, and plans to hold these exchanges every two years.



Olson  
2010



World  
Bank  
2011

The mission agreed to work with the CEPF Secretariat to better prepare future RITs for identifying and supervising [World Bank] safeguard activities in individual grants, including by adding this to the Terms of Reference for each RIT, and providing each RIT, upon its selection, a training in how to identify and supervise safeguard actions in each grant.



World  
Bank  
2011

**Response:**

- CEPF revised the terms of reference for its regional implementation teams to clarify their role in ensuring World Bank safeguard policies are followed and best practices are applied. It has also worked with the World Bank to ensure and facilitate training. Greater capacity on safeguard monitoring enables RITs and other grantees to access funding from some multilateral organizations, and contributes to sustainability for these organizations.

**Improvements are needed, in particular to raise the level of involvement of local stakeholders (nongovernmental organizations, but also university and private sector) compared with international actors, which remain the main beneficiaries of subsidies.**



AFD  
2014

**Response:**

- As of June 2014, 50 percent of CEPF's grant funding had been awarded to local organizations in the biodiversity hotspots, and of CEPF's total 1,913 grantees as of June 2014, 54 percent were local grantees. CEPF and its regional implementation teams, as well as external grant proposal reviewers, carefully weigh potential grantees' capacity to achieve project deliverables. CEPF increasingly encourages the teaming of local organizations that may not have sufficient capacity for a project with regional or international organizations with more capacity in order to achieve targets while building local knowledge and technical skills. We continue to look for opportunities to engage with more local organizations in our pursuit of building civil society capacity.



Orikumi lagoon and Karaburun Peninsula,  
© PPNEA

# Strategic Approach

CEPF investment in a biodiversity hotspot is guided by an ecosystem profile—a science-based analysis and strategy developed through extensive stakeholder consultations that offers a roadmap for prioritized conservation in the region, and defines the specific geographies and goals of CEPF’s grant making. Local, national and international organizations, community representatives, donors and government officials work with the profiling team to ensure that CEPF’s funds go to the areas under the highest environmental threat that offer the best opportunity for impact and leveraging of additional donor support.

## Evaluation Findings

Ecosystem profiles provide invaluable insight into the character and dynamics of the ecosystems they cover, identifying the underlying causes of threats to biological diversity, and the activities, investments and actors involved in conservation efforts in the region. The process by which they are developed also serves as an excellent means for mobilizing public, private and community interest around the objectives of conservation, in general, and the aims of the CEPF ‘corridor’ conservation approach, in particular.



World Bank 2003

CEPF’s emphasis on employing good science, engaging stakeholders, building local capacities, mainstreaming biodiversity and harmonizing donor investments in biodiversity is also of considerable strategic value to these organizations, while the capacity to support regional environmental collaboration involving multiple countries provides an important contrast to the more prevalent single country donor model.



Wells 2006

CEPF’s model of developing conservation strategies through a highly participatory process, providing immediate implementation grants together with consistent organizational guidance and interaction, maintaining a focus on sustainable financing (14 sustainable financing mechanisms were put in place, globally), and encouraging marked innovation and calculated risk-taking in investments has proven to be measurably successful over the past 10 years.



Olson 2010

CEPF is unique among funding mechanisms in that it focuses on building civil society capacity to protect global, high-priority biological areas and examines conservation threats on a landscape scale. CEPF has been successful at identifying and supporting a regional, rather than a national, approach to achieving conservation outcomes and engages a wide range of private, non-governmental and community institutions to support nations in addressing conservation needs through coordinated regional efforts. Furthermore, the CEPF is a truly global program, with projects spanning 53 countries that together strengthen the capacity of local civil society organizations worldwide.



World Bank 2011

The CEPF-funded interventions are globally relevant to local development issues, which are increasingly integrated in the profiles of ecosystems.

The CEPF instruments get concrete results (outputs and outcomes) in accordance with the objectives that were fixed.



## Recommendations

Despite its fundamental merits, the strategic focus of the program may not be fulfilling its own promise. In some cases, the strategic priorities defined in the Ecosystem Profiles may still be too broad to facilitate grant making, making it hard to move from the identified strategic priority to a rapid and effective definition of concrete programs to address it. This gap between priority setting and implementation should be analyzed in forthcoming field-based evaluations in order to define effective methodologies for bridging it in the future.



### Response:

- The Fund's strategic focus, as defined in the ecosystem profiles developed for each region where it invests, has been refined over time in response to lessons learned and evaluation findings. CEPF has narrowed its targets to those deemed most strategic, critical and actionable, with consideration for what other conservation donors are doing in the region and what they are planning to do in the near future.

In order to create stronger alliances among NGOs participating in CEPF-funded strategies in a given region, it seems to me that the CEPF staff needs to deliberately support in-country strategizing and capacity building for alliances of grantees. Although this is being done in most regions to one degree or another, it should become a common part of the CEPF approach.



### Response:

- Developing networks of grantees and other stakeholders has become a central element of each regional CEPF strategy, and is among the key deliverables for CEPF's regional implementation teams, who are contracted for each investment region to be CEPF's on-the-ground strategy implementers. CEPF has so far supported the establishment or strengthening of 78 networks.

Develop a vigorous public outreach strategy designed to capitalize on lessons the CEPF has learned in the field and stimulate discussion among grantees in the field, governments and civil society, and among the CEPF partners and the broader donor and NGO community.



**Response:**

- The Fund has taken multiple actions to reach out to grantees, donors and other interested parties to share lessons learned. These have ranged from gathering grantees at the mid-point and end of investment periods to share and reflect on lessons; using grants to bring together grantees from different countries, but with similar challenges, to learn from one another; and disseminating lessons via publications, video, websites and social media. Additionally, sharing and applying lessons is a central theme of the new CEPF strategy to be launched in 2015.

Finally, as part of the Fund's reflections on lessons learned, the Donor Council should begin to explore the future of the Fund. The model CEPF represents is proving effective and the partners should carefully consider alternatives for extending the life of the Fund.



World Bank  
2003

**Response:**

- CEPF's donors have long had the fund's future in mind, and as results have accumulated, they have reacted with continued financial and technical support, and attracted additional donors—most recently the European Union. The 2015 strategy acknowledges that CEPF's demonstrated effectiveness needs to be scaled up and investment periods lengthened to truly address the global biodiversity crisis.

Conservation impacts will be more solidly secured if the investment configuration for each hotspot is expanded from eight to 10 years with budgets in the range of \$10 million to \$20 million USD. A quarter of the funding should be set aside until the last three years to support highly effective initiatives and emergent priorities or to respond to significant crises. CEPF regions that have not experienced this level or duration of attention should be revisited to approach this investment configuration.



Olson  
2010

**Response:**

- While CEPF has always worked to sustain results achieved through its investments, its approach has evolved over time. Most recently, CEPF has moved from a strict five-year initial investment to a more tailored approach informed by the civil society and environment analysis developed in the ecosystem profiles. For instance, in the East Melanesian Islands, CEPF's initial investment period will be eight years, with an early emphasis on small grants designed to build up local organizations. And CEPF's 2015 strategy will define the point at which a region's civil society has grown sufficiently to sustain conservation without CEPF guiding longer investment periods..

It is critical that CEPF vigilantly retain its niche and strategic focus on reducing biodiversity loss and not become distracted by other priorities.



Olson  
2010

**Response:**

- CEPF and its donors remain steadfastly committed to safeguarding biodiversity and the vital ecosystems that support biodiversity and people. This was enthusiastically reiterated when the donors approved the new strategy for CEPF in January 2014.

Despite the considerable challenges, conservation will be best served if CEPF applies its conservation model to as many hotspots as possible over the next decade. CEPF's process and catalytic support has the potential to dramatically shift conservation momentum even with modest investment. The entire region for those hotspots where CEPF targeted only a particular sub-region should be revisited, as well.



Olson  
2010

**Response:**

- While CEPF recognizes the need in regard to stemming biodiversity loss, it is also conscious that with limited resources, it is better to concentrate in fewer hotspots for longer periods of time to secure stable and sustainable change for safeguarding biodiversity.

CEPF should consider how to expand its program for application to other types of ecosystems around the planet. The kinds of conservation activities promoted by CEPF will be effective in all regions and building upon an existing program is much more cost-effective than assembling any new ones. High priority regions for attention include threatened biomes, such as tropical dry forests, rapidly changing Sahelian ecoregions, and freshwater ecosystems.



Olson  
2010

**Response:**

- CEPF retains its focus on biodiversity hotspots, as these well-defined regions of extremely high biodiversity facing tremendous threats merit prioritization.

# Supporting Human Well-Being

CEPF works in the world's biodiversity hotspots, which are home to one-third of the global human population, including many who live in poverty. Interventions by CEPF's grantees frequently support human well-being, allowing local communities to continue to benefit from the goods and services vital ecosystems provide. Many CEPF-funded projects around the globe are designed to increase economic opportunity for local communities through sustainable use of resources, ecotourism or other environmentally friendly enterprises.

## Evaluation Findings

There appears to be a strong overlap between the CEPF hotspots and concentrations of rural poverty, suggesting that those projects supporting alternative livelihoods are likely to be benefiting the poorest of the poor, many of whom depend directly on the services provided by the same ecosystems that CEPF is helping to conserve.

CEPF projects promote a range of activities that strengthen the resilience of local communities and their natural support systems, including watershed management, promoting traditional stewardship practices, improved management of natural resources, discouraging destructive and unsustainable practices, gathering baseline data for improved management, establishing zoning for sustainability, and creating jobs and alternative livelihoods.

Wells  
2006

Olson  
2010



Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, © SPNL



(*Brookesia vadoni*) Dwarf chameleon  
© Piotr Naskrecki

# Resource Mobilization

One of the priorities of the Convention on Biological Diversity is to increase the amount of resources going to biodiversity conservation. CEPF has proven to be a unique mechanism, enabling its donors to reach out and support civil society organizations of all sizes in biodiversity hotspots.

## Evaluation Findings

Under the guidance of the Donor Council, the Fund is demonstrating a new model for mobilizing strategic assistance to civil society and nongovernmental organizations to work on coordinated strategies for protecting and managing endangered ecosystems of exceptional biodiversity. Its strategic focus and support for non-governmental initiatives is addressing a genuine need in developing countries, and the CEPF Management Team has shown that it can respond quickly and effectively to that need.

The evaluation field visits provided ample evidence that the CEPF model is sufficiently flexible to effectively identify and support a range of civil society organizations of different types in varying contexts. Few of these grantees, particularly the less experienced emerging organizations, have access to alternative sources of funding.

It seems evident that conservation programs such as CEPF are considerably more cost-effective than the massive investments that would be needed to restore such ecosystems if they were to become degraded and lose the ability to provide essential services to the poor (e.g., water, fuelwood, fodder, and flood protection, etc.).

The donors have launched a very promising and special program in CEPF. 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.

CEPF's success derives heavily from the weight of the financial, technical, and logistical resources and far-reaching influence six major donors can bring to a single global conservation program. Few, if any, other global programs benefit from such an involved and high profile consortium. CEPF gains are made possible, in part, by the flexibility and room for innovation imparted by sizeable budgets and cadre of prominent donors with long-standing experience in conservation investments.

Compared to the corpus of multi-country programs and funds for the benefit of conservation on the one hand, and to direct AFD interventions on the other hand, the CEPF, and therefore the French contribution to the CEPF, provides an added value that is real and recognized. The CEPF occupies a unique place in the landscape, and became a lead actor for biodiversity funding, valued for its mode of operation and its strong focus on biodiversity, based on scientific evidence.



World Bank  
2003



Wells  
2006



Wells  
2006



Wells  
2006



Olson  
2010



AFD  
2014

CEPF's specific approach is complementary to other tools and funds supported by France.

AFD  
2014

## Recommendations

Review the opportunities the CEPF might have in supporting public-private initiatives in keeping with the objectives and strategies of the Fund.

World  
Bank  
2003

### Response:

- While it has always been interested in opportunities for public-private initiatives, CEPF is making this kind of engagement a central part of the new strategy it will launch in 2015.



Czech Republic, © elPadawan

# Partnership

CEPF's visionary donors have come together to support both biodiversity and civil society through this unique conservation mechanism. A key component of CEPF's effectiveness is its ability to convene these global conservation forces and harness their expertise and resources to safeguard the world's most critical ecosystems and the human well-being that relies on those ecosystems.

## Evaluation Findings

It [CEPF] has demonstrated that a well-designed alliance between NGOs, Multilateral Development Banks and Foundations can work effectively with civil society in the field of conservation.

The great advantage of our partnership is the richly varied experiences of its diverse members and the opportunities they provide for CEPF to make strategic investment choices that reinforce and often expand their own conservation and sustainable development programs, as well as those of their partners.

World  
Bank  
2003

GEF  
2007



Solomon Islands, © Robin Moore



Penny Park Wetland, South Africa  
© CI/photo by Julie Shaw

# Monitoring and Evaluation

While CEPF has always collected data on the results of its grants, CEPF developed a new monitoring program in 2012 to better capture the impact of the Fund. The monitoring framework includes 23 indicators in four categories that are the four pillars of CEPF: biodiversity, human well-being, civil society capacity and enabling conditions—that is, factors that make long-term conservation possible.

## Evaluation Recommendations

A priority for the next phase of operations will be to strengthen performance monitoring at a hotspot level in two specific directions. First, both the grant directors and coordination units need to be more involved in portfolio performance reporting on a regular basis. Second, the use of conservation outcomes as long-term operational targets should be complemented by the development and adoption of socio-economic, political and civil society measures and indicators that will provide more feedback on CEPF's interim progress towards these outcomes.

Wells  
2006

### Response:

- To address this recommendation CEPF focused on preparing ecosystem profiles with additional in-depth sections on civil society, socio-economics and conservation-related policies in each hotspot. This led to the use of associated indicators to gauge progress in each investment region. Grant directors and coordinating teams have become more involved in portfolio monitoring by preparing annual portfolio overviews for each hotspot, which include reporting against targets. Additionally, each portfolio has a mid-term and final assessment workshop, for which a detailed report is produced. Further, the new monitoring program established in 2012 includes a set of socio economic indicators that will allow better assessment of impact.

More attention needs to be given to the systematic analysis and documentation of CEPF results and experiences. Lessons learned are not emerging at the portfolio level yet.

Wells  
2006

### Response:

- CEPF holds regional meetings and issues reports on the achievements and lessons of each investment region at the mid-way mark of the investment period, and at the end, and publishes these reports on its website, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net). The Fund also regularly publishes online articles on lessons learned from specific projects, and features them in its newsletter, social media and on the website.

CEPF will develop a comprehensive report of their Global Results Framework based on the Monitoring Program recently approved for development by the Donor Council and submit it to the Bank no later than September 30, 2012.

World  
Bank  
2011

**Response:**

- In June 2012 CEPF's Donor Council approved a new monitoring and evaluation framework. Based on that framework, CEPF now issues annual monitoring reports for its global program, and makes them available online at [www.cepf.net/monitoring](http://www.cepf.net/monitoring)

The mission recommends that CEPF carry out a study to measure the socioeconomic impacts of the project.



World  
Bank  
2011

**Response:**

- The monitoring and evaluation framework approved by CEPF's donors in June 2012 includes indicators pertaining to human well-being that aim to measure change in the number of individuals and communities receiving direct benefits. The framework also seeks to measure CEPF's impact in terms of indirect benefits by measuring the change in the amount of fresh water secured at CEPF-invested sites and delivered to downstream users, and the change in the amount of CO<sub>2</sub>e stored at CEPF-invested sites.

More results in terms of building the capacity of local NGOs and to improve livelihoods are desirable and monitoring and evaluation of these results should be more systematized.



AFD  
2014

**Response:**

- CEPF compiles information about the capacity of individual grantees using its Civil Society Tracking Tool. In the coming years, CEPF will be better able to articulate and analyze changes in the capacity of local NGOs once the tracking tool has been rolled out to all regions where CEPF is active, and when sufficient time has passed for grantees to complete both a baseline and a final capacity assessment. Efforts to improve information about the impact of CEPF on livelihoods will be addressed via routine monitoring of individual projects, specifically to collect information on number of beneficiaries and ways in which people benefit. CEPF has made improvements to its reporting formats and these will be fully implemented in 2015. This will allow the monitoring framework to be more systematically implemented.

# Conclusion

**Evaluation is an important part of a healthy environment that allows conservation organizations to grow and evolve.** CEPF seeks out, and takes very seriously, the feedback presented in evaluations of its program, as well as other forms of input. The Fund emphasizes learning from its own experiences, as well as those of external experts, to constantly improve efficacy and efficiency.

With more than 14 years of operation, CEPF is still a work in progress. But our assets, such as knowledge, skills, strategy, partnerships and adaptability, are constantly growing. The goal remains safeguarding biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and the people who depend on them. Each year, with the help of regular internal and external evaluation, we grow stronger and better able to achieve that goal, and to help governments, multilateral and private organizations, and civil society reach their own biodiversity and human well-being goals.

CEPF's results are clear and its contributions to slowing the fast pace of biodiversity loss have been recognized. Strengthening CEPF is crucial to reversing the trend of the biodiversity crisis. Learning and improving will continue to make CEPF stronger, which will in turn make the planet a better place for nature and people.



Succulent plant, South Africa,  
© Tessa Mildenhall



[www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net)

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The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank.

African elephant mother with baby, Kruger National Park, South Africa,  
© Megan Seman



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