

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
39th Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council
Virtual Meeting
Wednesday 15 December 2021
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)**

**Conservation Achievements of the Investment in the
Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot**

Background

The Mediterranean Basin is the second largest biodiversity hotspot in the world, covering 2 million km². In spite of a high population density and a long history of human occupation, the hotspot is home to a great diversity of plants, reptiles and freshwater species, and is an important region for bird migrations.

In 2012, CEPF launched a five-year program of investment in the hotspot, which resulted in the award of 108 grants to 84 organizations in 12 countries, with a total value of US\$11 million. In 2016, the updated ecosystem profile was approved by the CEPF Donor Council, taking into account the dramatic political changes in the region since the original ecosystem profile was prepared in 2010. The second investment phase, 2017–2022, is now entering its last year of implementation. Over the last four years, CEPF has awarded 134 grants (53 large and 81 small grants), for a total investment of close to US\$12 million, including a contribution of US\$2.5 million from the MAVA Foundation.

The hotspot has been impacted by several crises in the last few years: the Beirut blast and the economic downturn in Lebanon; civil war in Libya; and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit several countries very hard. The hotspot also faces rising challenges in relation to climate change, with higher temperatures and reduced rainfall generating dramatic wildfires in many places, threatening ecosystems and livelihoods in the region.

Despite these challenges, civil society is thriving and achieving great results all over the Mediterranean Basin.

CEPF Grant Director Pierre Carret will present highlights from the work, an overview of results, and prospects for future investment.