

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
41st Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council
In-Person, Tangier, Morocco, and Virtual Meeting
Monday 17 July 2023
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Tangier Time
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Brussels and Paris Time
9:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m (+1 day) Tokyo Time**

Conservation Achievements of the Investment in the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

Background

The Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands (MADIO) Biodiversity Hotspot is a priority among biodiversity hotspots because of its extreme diversity (with about 15,000 plant species of which more than 12,000 are endemic) and its high-level taxonomic endemism related to its isolation and archipelagic nature. It also qualifies as a hotspot due to the high proportion of the original vegetation that has been degraded or lost. Loss of native vegetation has been accompanied by loss of species populations due to overexploitation and the impacts of invasive alien species.

Over the centuries, humans have deeply disturbed ecosystems and biodiversity, and today these pressures continue as populations grow and economic development follows unsustainable pathways. Climate change is an increasingly important factor that exacerbates these pressures.

With a total investment of US\$12.2 million from January 2015 to June 2022, the CEPF investment strategy resulted in the award of 129 grants (68 large and 61 small grants) to 92 organizations, comprising 70 local and 22 international organizations. The implementation of the CEPF investment was supported by the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) at Fondation Tany Meva, a Malagasy foundation that supports CSOs to develop community-based management and sustainable use of natural resources.

Thanks to the work of the RIT, CEPF was able to support local and grassroots organizations, including ones located in remote parts of the hotspot. The grantees themselves were strengthened, with 28 local organizations reporting an increase in their organizational capacity over the period of CEPF support. They were also supported to collaborate more, both with each other and with public and private sector entities. At least 112 networks were established or strengthened to enable collective responses to conservation issues at grassroots, national and, in a few cases, regional levels.

This growth in civil society capacity and connectivity contributed to successful project implementation and translated into important impacts in terms of biodiversity, human well-being, civil society capacity and the enabling conditions for conservation. Headline impacts included: conservation interventions benefiting 158 priority species; improved management of 2 million hectares of Key Biodiversity Areas; and more than 500,000 people with well-being benefits, including improved land tenure, food security and access to ecosystem services.

While much was achieved during the investment phase, threats are increasing across the hotspot. Fortunately, CEPF began a new phase of investment in mid-2022 with support from the Green Climate Fund, through AFD. This new investment will be informed by experience gained by the CEPF Secretariat, the RIT and grantees during the previous phase, resulting in more efficient and impactful grant-making, with impacts on biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

CEPF Grant Director Peggy Poncelet will present highlights of the investment strategy and an overview of the impacts achieved by the portfolio.