

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
No Objection Approval Pursuant to Section 4.1 of the Operational Manual

November 8, 2024

Ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

Recommended Action Item:

The Donor Council is asked **to approve on a no-objection basis** the ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot, and an increase in CEPF's spending authority by US\$17.4 million for the implementation of this profile.

The deadline for no-objection approval is **December 23, 2024**.

Background

The ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot was updated between February and October 2024, following the Donor Council's selection of the hotspot for reinvestment at its Forty-second meeting on February 15, 2024.

This is intended to be a full reinvestment, following the first (2012-2017) and second (2018-2023) investment phases, during which CEPF provided a total of US\$24.9 million in grants, supporting 306 projects in the hotspot. The investment strategy set out in the updated ecosystem profile builds on the results achieved and lessons learned from these earlier investments.

The ecosystem profile was updated through a consultative process coordinated by the CEPF Secretariat, supported by a Lead Consultant. The updating process also drew on the results of the independent evaluation of the regional implementation team (RIT), and on two specific reviews (on freshwater and cultural landscape conservation). More than 170 stakeholders were consulted during the updating process, through email correspondence and questionnaires, individual interviews or through providing comments on the draft profile. Two strategic meetings were organized: in May 2024, with the RIT and CEPF Secretariat; and in June 2024 with the CEPF Mediterranean Advisory Committee.

The draft ecosystem profile was shared with the Working Group on October 24, 2024 for review and presented at the Seventy-fourth Working Group meeting on November 7, 2024. The ecosystem profile was subsequently revised, to address the few comments from the Working Group. A matrix showing how comments from the Working Group have been addressed is attached, together with the final ecosystem profile and an extended technical summary.

The Working Group discussed the question of investment in four countries of the hotspot that did not receive CEPF investment during previous phases: Iraq; Kosovo; Syria; and Türkiye. The recommendation from Working Group members was to consider these countries as options for future CEPF investment, subject to prior approval by the Donor Council. In due course, the CEPF Secretariat may seek the Donor Council's approval to extend investment into one or more of these countries, following further analysis of risks and opportunities.

Based on demand for funding during the previous investment phase, increased capacity of local civil society, significant cost inflation and potential expansion into new countries, a total spending authority of US\$17.4 million is requested. This compares with the spending authority of US\$14.52 million that the Donor Council approved for the previous phase (CEPF/DC/electronic/90).