

TROPICAL ANDES BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

In March, more than 80 grantees and partners—representing 40 civil society organizations and hailing from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru—met in Quito, Ecuador, for CEPF’s mid-term assessment for the hotspot.

Participants shared their experiences related to implementing conservation initiatives and evaluated CEPF’s progress toward achieving the conservation priorities outlined in the ecosystem profile.



MADAGASCAR AND THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

In March, CEPF grantee Association Vahatra released an updated version of one of Madagascar's seminal books on biodiversity—overcoming holes in the data set and archiving thousands of hard-copy documents to do so. Edited by Steven Goodman, Marie-Jeanne Raherilalao and Sébastien Wohlhauser, the 1,716 pages of “The Terrestrial Protected Areas of Madagascar: Their History, Description and Biota,” represent the work of 40 main authors and almost 250 contributors.



The first volume of the new text provides the historical and legal background of Madagascar's protected areas as well as their geology, soils, climate, vegetation, flora, classification schemes and vertebrates systematics. The second and third volumes detail the 98 terrestrial protected areas and present a road map for future conservation efforts.

CEPF Executive Director Olivier Langrand authored a chapter on the history of Madagascar’s protected areas. He was present at the book release celebrations held at the University of Antananarivo and Chicago’s Field Museum.

CERRADO BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

To continue fostering cooperation and collaboration, the regional implementation team reached out to CI-Brasil (implementing the GEF-Matopiba project); the Nature Conservancy and WWF-Brasil (working on the Collaboration for Forests and Agriculture initiative led by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation); and to FUNBIO and the Partnerships For Forests initiative (new players in the Cerrado).



During the RIT Leader Exchange in February, the RIT leader Michael Becker and the Cerrado Grant Director Peggy Poncelet met again with CI to advance discussions on how best to involve Starbucks, which partners with CI, on a major coffee project in the Cerrado supported by CEPF, Nespresso, Lavazza and potentially Nestle.

The RIT also met representatives of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (DGM) program, which is explicitly investing in traditional and indigenous people in the hotspot, and of the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA), which also has a portfolio in the Cerrado.

MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL ASIA

In March, CEPF Executive Director Olivier Langrand traveled to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to present at a conference on climate change organized by the World Bank and Central Asia.



During his presentation, titled “Biodiversity and Climate Finance in the Mountains of Central Asia,” he introduced CEPF and described the impacts of climate change on the region, CEPF’s forthcoming investment in the hotspot, and the value of nature-based solutions, which CEPF-funded projects will promote.

EASTERN AFROMONTANE BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT



The Eastern Afromontane final assessment meeting was held in Entebbe, Uganda, from 2 to 5 July. The meeting was organized and managed by the Tropical Biology Association as part of its ongoing grant. There were representatives from 22 grantees, across 10 countries, in attendance. Several CEPF staff members joined, including Olivier Langrand and Grant Director Dan Rothberg. The event was opened by Panta Kasoma, a senior Ugandan

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conservation scientist who contributed to the ecosystem profile, as well as Helen Pippard, the team leader for the East Melanesian Islands Regional Implementation Team.



The event was narrower in scope than many other CEPF final assessment workshops, focusing on impacts, lessons learned and sustainability. The most-engaged CEPF grantees were invited to attend.

In April, Tanzania Forest Conservation Group hosted a three-day gender mainstreaming exchange in Tanzania, also organized by Tropical Biology Association. Several CEPF grantees participated in the exchange, which included a discussion on each organization's experience with gender-related issues and a visit to a community forest conservation network that was established with successful gender mainstreaming.

Céline Desbrosses attended as the Secretariat's gender focal point. She reinforced CEPF's expectations related to gender mainstreaming and reviewed CEPF's gender tools with the group.

GUINEAN FORESTS OF WEST AFRICA

In January, the regional implementation team for the hotspot organized a training workshop for organizations that had received small grants from CEPF to strengthen the constituency and their capacities for project implementation and reporting.

This workshop took place on São Tomé Island with 19 representatives from nine countries. It consisted of three days of presentations and group exercises, and one full day of field visits, covering three sites on the island.



The workshop not only provided baseline tools essential to the implementation of each grant, but also served as a learning exchange and networking opportunity that could expand the impact of each individual project.

EAST MELANESIAN ISLANDS

With funding from CEPF, the organization Nakau has been working with communities and companies in Vanuatu to progress ecotourism activities. An initial major outcome of the project occurred in July: The first Community Conservation Area (CCA) in Torba Province, Malaklolop, was established on the southwest coast of Gaua Island.

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As part of the same project, Nakau developed tourism plans to encourage financing of conservation activities within the Malakolop CCA on as well as the Nusumetu Protected Area on Tanna.

On Santo, improvements were made to an eco-trekking tour of Mount Tabwemasana. In June, Chief Aram of the Kerepua community signed a partnership agreement with the tour agent Wrecks to Rainforest to support conservation activities in the Mount Tabwemasana CCA. The agreement will ensure that benefits of tours are equitably shared, with some money going directly to conservation outcomes in the Tabwemasana CCA.



INDO-BURMA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

More than 130 conservation and development practitioners attended the Indo-Burma Phase II Final Assessment Workshop held from 28 to 30 May in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Participants reflected on progress and achievements made in conservation, explored major conservation issues still facing the region, and assessed progress since 2013 toward CEPF's long-term goals for the hotspot.

Investment results include:

- Strengthened conservation of 1.3 million hectares of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), through community-based models.
- Demonstrated effective models for species conservation, leading to the stabilization or recovery of core populations of 32 globally threatened species.
- Strengthened capacity of more than 130 local civil society organizations to design, implement and monitor the impacts of conservation projects.
- Delivered tangible well-being benefits for more than 100 local and indigenous communities, through livelihood interventions linked directly to biodiversity conservation.
- Established or strengthened 40 civil society networks to enable collective responses to priority and emerging conservation issues, such as wildlife trade, hydropower dams, and economic land concessions.



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- Influenced 13 national policies laws or regulations in favor of biodiversity conservation

The US\$15 million CEPF investment will close in 2020. In addition to CEPF's funding, the ecosystem profile was used by other funders to guide an additional US\$30 million in investment to the hotspot. On top of this, CEPF's grantees raised around US\$20 million in additional funding from other sources.

WALLACEA BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Yayasan LINI is working on the Banggai Islands, a small archipelago off the eastern coast of Sulawesi, Indonesia. Coral reefs off the coasts of these islands are home to the Banggai cardinalfish (*Pterapogon kauderni*), an Endangered species valued in the aquarium trade. LINI is working with six small-island communities to improve awareness on the value of healthy reefs and to establish sanctuary areas with no-take zones.



The organization is also establishing a beach-side aquarium breeding area for the fish. The goal is for the community to maintain healthy reefs but still raise individual captive-bred animals for legal sale in the aquarium fish market. CEPF and other donors are eagerly watching this project as a possible model for other small island communities.

MEDITERRANEAN BASIN BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Algeria's Djebel Babor Forest, at the edge of the Atlas Mountains, is home to the Endangered Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*), Endangered Algerian nuthatch (*Sitta ledanti*) and the Critically Endangered Algerian fir (*Abies numidica*). The forest was classified as a national park in 1921, but a decade later the size of the park was significantly reduced and then, in 1985, it was declassified altogether. That changed on 28 May 2019 when the Algerian government officially declared the site a protected area.

The struggle to get protection for this site began in 2013, when organizations led by the Algerian conservation group AREA-ED, with support from CEPF, came together to protect the forest from fires, illegal logging and over-grazing. Scientific surveys found that the area was even more ecologically important than previously thought, hosting important raptor nesting sites and 32 bird species protected by law. One of the main solutions was a "buffer zone" of reduced land use around the park, which helped prevent farming and other human activities from encroaching upon the forest.



AREA-ED held meetings with local communities and rolled out a public education campaign, ensuring that the importance of the forest and the plans surrounding it were well understood by local communities.

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National park status will garner better investment and protection for the forest and the Endangered species that call it home. It will also enable AREA-ED to work more closely with local people on sustainable farming projects. Ecotourism is another exciting possibility. Djebel Babor Forest is one of the first forests in Algeria to be managed as part of a whole landscape, rather than in isolation. In this way, it will form the template for similar projects in the future.

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