

# Mid-Term Assessment

## CEPF Investment in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

### September 2020

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Barley field in the Rif Mountains corridor. © Conservation International/photo by Pierre Carret

# 1. Introduction

The Mediterranean Hotspot is the second largest hotspot in the world, covering about 2 million km<sup>2</sup>. It stretches from Cabo Verde in the west to Jordan and Turkey in the east, and from Italy in the north to Tunisia in the south, and comprises about 5,000 islands scattered around the Mediterranean Sea. CEPF invests only in the Balkans, North Africa, the Middle East and Cabo Verde (see section II.3)



From 2012 to 2017, CEPF implemented an initial five-year program of investment in the hotspot, which resulted in the award of 108 grants to 84 different organizations in 12 countries, with a total value of US\$11 million. Based on the preliminary results of this first phase, a consortium led by BirdLife International and IUCN was mandated in 2016 to update the ecosystem profile, during a year-long process in which more than 500 stakeholders participated. This new ecosystem profile, subsequently approved by CEPF donor council, defined the strategy for CEPF investment for 2017-2022. The CEPF Donor Council approved the profile in mid-2017, providing an initial US\$10 million envelope for its implementation, which started in October 2017.

**This report aims to assess progress towards the goals set out in the ecosystem profile, evaluate gaps in the CEPF grant portfolio and set priorities for the remainder of the 5-year investment period. It draws on experience and lessons learned from civil society organizations implementing CEPF grants and from CEPF partners in the region. In addition, it incorporates the findings of the mid-term assessment process, led from February to May 2020 using mostly online tools and teleconferences to get feedback from partners, due to limitations in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## 2. Niche and Strategy for CEPF Investment

### 2.1 Strategic focus for investment, 2017-2022

Four strategic considerations shape the overall CEPF program in the Mediterranean Basin:

**Supporting local and national organizations in a regional context.** CEPF's priority is to focus support on local and national civil society, with granting to international organizations limited to actions that either require specific expertise not yet available in the eligible countries, or have the main objective of transferring skills and capacities to local or national partners. Capacity building will be delivered as part of specific project grants, and through 'north-south' and 'south-south' exchanges between sites and CSOs.

**Strategic engagement with the private sector.** Lessons from Phase 1 are to: start at the local scale, with businesses that are rooted in the community and landscape; seek opportunities to promote the image of the industry/business at the same time as delivering conservation benefits; gather data that demonstrate to business the financial benefits of the action; and be more creative in seeking opportunities for in-kind support from businesses. The growing market for fair trade and sustainably produced goods may provide opportunities to incentivize farmers and land managers to adopt biodiversity-friendly approaches, although the limitations of eco-labeling are recognized and dependence on achieving a price-premium needs to be avoided.

**Building on local actions to achieve policy impacts.** There is a need for specific actions to build on site-based projects to address wider policy, funding and programmatic issues, with roles for the RIT, partners and grantees. The investment program will facilitate links between grantees and decision makers, contribute to partnerships and on-going processes of planning and reform, and promote the role and acceptance of the value of CSOs more generally.

**Managing risk.** Two important risks for the program are committing resources to too many projects, and the volatile political and security situation in several countries in the hotspot. The profile proposes to manage these risks by focusing on a limited set of high priority sites; focusing on site-based action; spreading the geographic risks by investing across the eligible countries; and creating opportunities for synergy among grants.

## 2.2 CEPF Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities

Strategic Direction	Investment priorities
1: Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the preservation of <b>biodiversity in coastal areas</b> .	1.1: Engage local stakeholders in conservation actions that address threats to key elements of biodiversity in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.
	1.2: Engage private sector stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices that deliver positive impacts for conservation in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.
	1.3: Support civil society to engage with local or national governments to mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated coastal zone management, land-use and development planning processes.
2: Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened <b>freshwater biodiversity</b> .	2.1: Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services.
	2.2: Take action to reduce threats and improve management of selected sites in priority freshwater catchments with the participation of local stakeholders.
	2.3: Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority CMZs.
3: Promote the maintenance of traditional land use practices necessary for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of <b>high cultural and biodiversity value</b> .	3.1: Support local communities to increase the benefit they receive from maintaining and enhancing traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use and agricultural practices.
	3.2: Promote awareness of the value of traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices among local community and government decision makers, to secure their recognition and support.
	3.3: Encourage business actors in the trade chain to support and promote traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.
4: Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the <b>conservation of plants</b> that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges.	4.1: Increase knowledge and skills to support assessment and planning for the conservation of plants, and foster the emergence of a new generation of young professionals in plant conservation.
	4.2: Support integration of plant conservation into the management of Protected Areas.
	4.3: Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with landowners and managers.
5: Strengthen the <b>regional conservation community</b> through the sharing of best practices and knowledge among grantees across the hotspot.	5.1: Support regional and thematically focused learning processes for CSOs and stakeholders.
	5.2: Support grantees to understand and engage with international conventions and processes.
6: Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a <b>Regional Implementation Team</b> .	6.1: Build a constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile.
	6.2: Act as a liaison unit for relevant networks throughout the Mediterranean to harmonize investments and direct new funding to priority issues and sites.

## 2.3 Eligible Countries for CEPF investment

CEPF support is available for conservation action within the Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspot in those countries that are signatories to the CBD and that are World Bank client members, excluding EU Member States and their territories and several independent countries of Mediterranean Europe (Andorra, San Marino, Monaco, etc). The security situation in some countries also currently precludes effective grant-making to civil society, although this may change in the coming years. Finally, the national governments, represented by the GEF Focal Point, should endorse the CEPF ecosystem profile to allow for CEPF investment.

The following table summarizes the eligibility of hotspot countries for CEPF support as of March 2020.

<b>Mediterranean Countries</b>	<b>CEPF Eligibility</b>	<b>Endorsement Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Albania</b>	Yes	September 2017	
<b>Algeria</b>	Yes	-	No endorsement to date. Discussions are ongoing with authorities, but social and political situation in Algeria makes progress limited. Algeria endorsed and was eligible during Phase 1.
<b>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</b>	Yes	January 2018	
<b>Cabo Verde</b>	Yes	December 2017	
<b>Egypt</b>	Yes	July 2018	Although endorsement secured, pending discussions on process for granting civil society organizations
<b>Jordan</b>	Yes	October 2017	
<b>Lebanon</b>	Yes	October 2017	
<b>Libya</b>	Yes	October 2017	Security situation implies specific measures to award grant in this country
<b>Macedonia</b>	Yes	September 2017	
<b>Montenegro</b>	Yes	December 2017	
<b>Morocco</b>	Yes	November 2017	
<b>Palestine</b>	Yes	October 2019	Decision of CEPF Donor Council DC35/5 of October 23, 2019, allowed CEPF to invest in Palestine. Endorsement letter from the Director General of the Environment Quality Authority received on 29/10/2019
<b>Syria</b>	Yes	-	Current investments impossible due to political and security reasons.
<b>Tunisia</b>	Yes	October 2017	
<b>Turkey</b>	Yes	-	GEF focal point informed CEPF in January 2018 that the profile would not be endorsed. No investment planned for Phase 2.

See also discussion on geographical scope of CEPF investment in Section VI. 2.

In the context of the CEPF investment, for operational reasons, the Mediterranean Basin hotspot has been divided into four “CEPF sub-regions”:

- Balkans (Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia)
- Middle East (Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt)
- North Africa / Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya)
- Cabo Verde

The eligibility of these sub-regions to the five strategic directions described above (point 2) is summarized in the table below.

Str. Dir Sub-region	SD1 Coastal Areas	SD2 Freshwater	SD3 Cultural Landscape	SD4 Plant Conservation	SD5 Regional Cooperation
Balkans	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Middle East	no	no	yes	yes	yes
North Africa	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Cabo Verde	yes	no	no	yes	yes

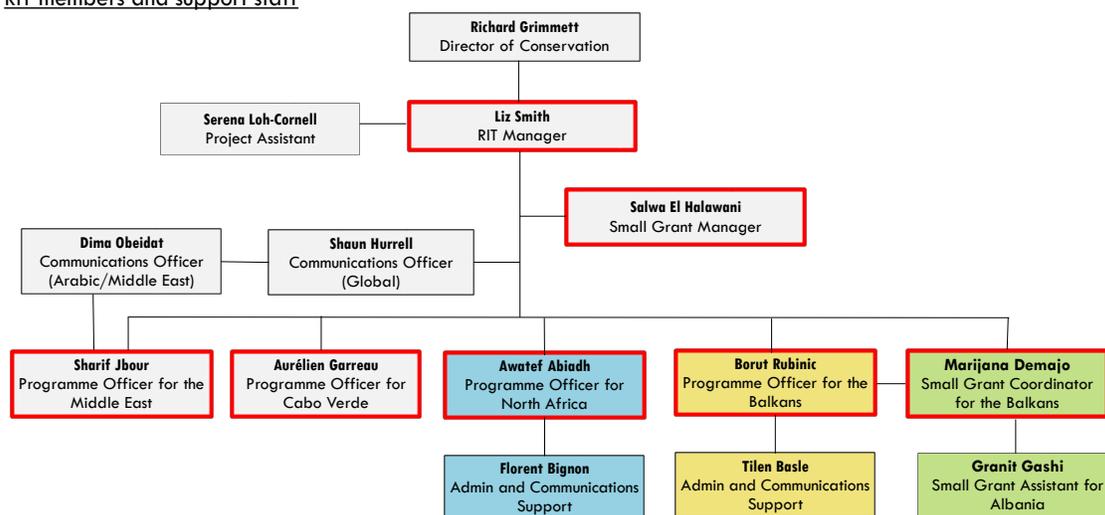
### 3. Coordinating CEPF Grant-Making

Effective in October 2017, the regional implementation team for the Mediterranean Basin hotspot is comprised of BirdLife International including its Middle East Office, la Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (BirdLife in France; covering North Africa), and DOPPS (BirdLife in Slovenia; covering the Balkans).

Most of the RIT members were already part of the RIT during the first phase, namely Liz Smith (RIT Manager), Borut Rubinic, Awatef Abiadh and Sharif Jbour (respectively Programme Officers for the Balkans, North Africa, and Middle East). Richard Grimmett continues to provide line management and strategic support to the RIT Manager. The Programme Officers also each have part-time support in their respective office to provide translation and other admin support.

The RIT has evolved during the first half of the investment phase, firstly to replace some team members who left for other positions. These changes have been quite limited: the Mediterranean RIT “core team” has a low turn-over. The second reason for evolution of the RIT relates to the additional funding provided by the MAVA Foundation for reinforcing the small grants mechanism in the Balkans, which led to the addition of an extra partner in the consortium: Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia (BPSSS).

RIT members and support staff



**Key:**

- Lines of communication
- BirdLife International    □ LPO (BirdLife France)    □ DOPPS (BirdLife Slovenia)    □ BPSSS (BirdLife Serbia)    □ Core RIT Staff

## 4. Collaboration with CEPF Donors and other Funders

Several donors support biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, and regional initiatives and platforms exist to foster partnership and collaboration. CEPF has, over the past years, strengthened relationships with the donor community working specifically with non-state actors in the field of conservation.

In particular, the **CEPF Mediterranean Advisory Committee** provides strategic advice and helps identify opportunities for collaboration (see table). It is complemented by an **expert group on Mediterranean plants** (to advise on Strategic Direction 4) and an **expert group on coastal zones** (for Strategic Direction 1).

CEPF also participates in the **Mediterranean Donors Roundtable**, which brings together, once a year, representatives of the Funding Fish Foundation, Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM), Adessium Foundation, Thalassa Foundation, MAVA Foundation, Prince Albert II Foundation, Fundacion Biodiversidad, Sigrid Rausing Foundation, and sometimes other foundations.

Advisory Committee Members	
Fabrice Bernard	Conservatoire du Littoral
Constance Corbier	Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)
Bertrand de Montmollin	IUCN/SSC/MPSG - Mediterranean Plant Specialist Group
Paule Gros	MAVA Foundation
Philippe Mondielli	Prince Albert II Foundation
Ricardo Pimenta Monteiro	The GEF Small Grants Programme Cabo Verde
Antonio Troya	The IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
Jean Jalbert	Tour du Valat
Paolo Lombardi	WWF Mediterranean Programme Office
Verena Sommer	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Nedal M. Al Ouran	UNDP, Jordan

The collaboration is particularly strong with the MAVA Foundation, which has been a partner for CEPF in the region since the first ecosystem profile (in 2008-2009) and contributed to the first investment phase. In the second investment phase, the MAVA Foundation supported the ecosystem profile update with a US\$100,000 grant, complemented by the same amount from Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco. In 2019, the MAVA Foundation and CEPF signed an agreement for an additional contribution of US\$578,000 to extend the small grants mechanism in the Balkans.

The RIT continued discussions at sub-regional and project level with different initiatives to ensure synergies, such as with PPI OSCAN (a small grant mechanism for North African NGOs supported by FFEM and the MAVA Foundation), SMILO (an initiative supported partly by AFD to support sustainable development on small islands, with which CEPF collaborates in Cabo Verde) and a WWF-led capacity program in Libya supported by the EU (with which CEPF co-hosted several training sessions).

## 5. Portfolio Status to Date

### 5.1 Calls for proposals

Since October 2017, CEPF has launched 10 calls for proposals: three for large grants and seven for small grants.

CfP	Release	Deadline	Specifications	Countries	LOIs received	LOIs approved*
<b>CfP 1</b>	Dec. 2017	Feb. 2018	Large Grants SD 1 & 4	All eligible countries	<b>118</b>	<b>17 (14%)</b>
<b>CfP 2</b>	Jun. 2018	Sep. 2018	Large Grants SD 2 & 3	All eligible countries	<b>42</b>	<b>10 (24%)</b>
<b>CfP 3</b>	Jun. 2018	Sep. 2018	Small Grants SD 1 & 4	All eligible countries	<b>47</b>	<b>24 (51%)</b>
<b>CfP 4</b>	Jun. 2019	Aug. 2019	Large Grants SD 2	Bosnia & Herzegovina; North Macedonia, Morocco, Tunisia	<b>25</b>	<b>7 (28%)</b>
<b>CfP 5</b>	Jun. 2019	Jul. 2019	Small Grants SD 3	Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia	<b>16</b>	<b>4 (25%)</b>
<b>CfP 6</b>	Oct. 2019	Dec. 2019	Small Grants SD 2	Bosnia & Herzegovina; North Macedonia, Morocco, Tunisia	<b>60</b>	<b>13 (22%)</b>
<b>CfP 7</b>	Dec. 2019	Jan. 2020	Small Grants SD 4	Palestine	<b>17</b>	<b>4 (23%)</b>
<b>CfP 8</b>	Dec. 2019	Jan. 2020	Small Grants SD 5 (Regional Meeting)	All countries	<b>4</b>	<b>1 (25%)</b>
<b>CfP 9</b>	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Small Grants SD 4, SD 2 – Joint Call with PONT	Albania, North Macedonia	<b>23</b>	<b>3 (13%)</b>
<b>CfP 10</b>	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Small Grants SD 1 – private sector	Tunisia (El Haouaria area)	<b>10</b>	<b>4 (40%)</b>

\*Note that some LOIs approved are still being processed.

### 5.2 Portfolio Overview

From 1 October 2018 until 1 June 2020, 71 grants were awarded by CEPF: 33 large grants and 38 Small Grants, for an overall budget of about US\$5.56 million. Including the grant issued in FY18 to BirdLife International for the regional implementation team, about 70% of the budget allocation for the investment phase has been committed as of 1 June 2020.

Strategy	Allocated Budget <sup>1</sup>	Contracted Grants			Budget Balance	Percentage Contracted
		Total Amount	Large Grants	Small Grants		
SD1 Coastal Areas	\$2 460 000	\$1 988 311	\$1 735 268	\$253 044	\$471 689	81%
SD2 Freshwater	\$2 410 000	\$1 824 139	\$1 775 673	\$48 466	\$585 861	76%
SD3 Cultural Landscapes	\$2 350 000	\$488 549	\$378 925	\$109 624	\$1 861 451	21%
SD4 Plant Conservation	\$1 100 000	\$1 252 336	\$990 799	\$261 537	-\$152 336	114%
SD5 Regional Cooperation and Networks	\$430 000	\$10 559	\$0	\$10 559	\$419 441	2%
Regional Implementation Team	\$1 768 000	\$1 767 786	\$1 767 786	\$0	\$214	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10 518 000</b>	<b>\$7 331 681</b>	<b>\$6 648 451</b>	<b>\$683 230</b>	<b>\$3 186 319</b>	<b>70%</b>

The table below provides details in terms of numbers of grants and budget allocated per sub-region and country.

Country	All Grants	Large Grants	Small Grants	Commitment
Cabo Verde	4	3	1	\$434 535
Libya	5	0	5	\$96 761
Morocco	8	5	3	\$761 893
Tunisia	12	7	5	\$1 135 368
Egypt	0	0	0	\$0
Jordan	2	1	1	\$185 943
Lebanon	6	3	3	\$490 726
Palestine	4	0	4	\$78 884
Albania	11	3	8	\$669 047
<i>Albania; Montenegro</i>	2	2	0	\$322 560
<i>Albania; North Macedonia</i>	1	1	0	\$151 837
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5	4	1	\$529 889
Montenegro	4	1	3	\$291 743
North Macedonia	5	3	2	\$389 979
Multi-Country	2	0	2	\$24 730
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>\$5 563 895</b>

Eighty-seven percent of the grants (representing 90% of the budget) has been awarded to local organizations in the eligible countries. Four large grants have been awarded to international organizations: two from France, one from Italy and one from Slovenia. Additionally, five small grants have been provided to international organizations, in support to local organizations or for specific activities (surveys, conferences). All the grants to international organizations support, financially or through capacity building, local organizations or institutions.

<sup>1</sup> Note: the allocated budget per strategic direction varies from the ecosystem profile due to inclusion of the \$400,000 additional funding from the MAVA Foundation to small grants in the Balkans, secured in 2019. The allocation of this funding was as follows: SD1: \$60,000; SD2: \$140,000, SD4: \$200,000; the RIT received an additional \$118,000



## 6. Performance of CEPF Investment

### 6.1 Management of Calls for Proposals

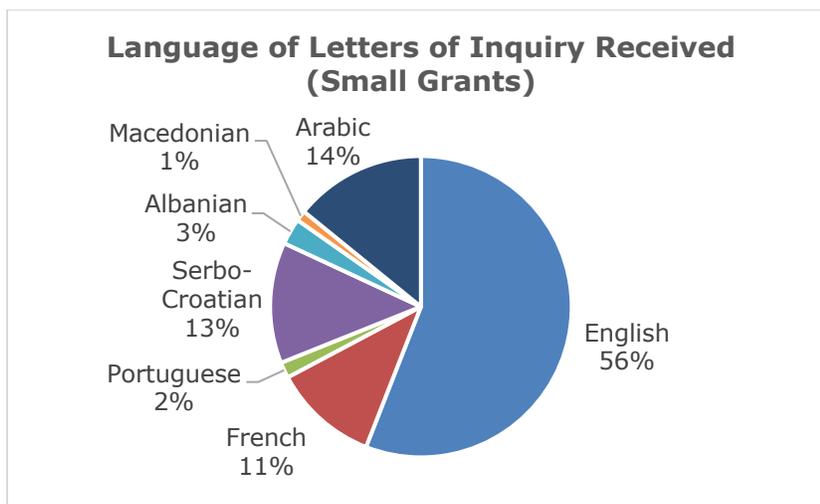
As indicated above, since October 2017, **CEPF launched 10 calls for proposals**: three for large grants and seven for small grants. CEPF received in total **362 letters of inquiry (LOIs)**: 185 for large grants, and 177 for small grants. These figures indicate that CEPF is now well known in the region, and that the fund's outreach efforts are adequate, allowing for a very open, competitive and transparent process for grant application.

Each unsuccessful applicant receives a personalized rejection letter, explaining the reasons for rejection and, if applicable, providing guidance for next calls or access to other funds. Although this represents a substantial workload for CEPF secretariat and the RIT – with **275 rejection letters sent to CEPF applicants in the last two years** - CEPF sees this process as an important aspect of capacity building. Feedback from the conservation community indicates that this is highly appreciated.

The average success rate is 18% for large grant LOIs, and 30% for small grant LOIs, with some variations depending on countries and strategic directions. Four small grants have been allocated under the "grant by invitation" process: two for preparing a large grant proposal (as large grant proposals under the call needed a thorough preparation phase), and two for specific actions/assessments when the unique capacity of the organization in question was recognized.

Calls for proposals **for large grants are launched in English, French and Portuguese**, the CEPF official languages used in the region. Calls for proposals for small grants have been launched in English, French and Portuguese as well as in **Arabic, Serbo-Croatian** and, since the expansion of the small grant mechanism in the Balkans (thanks to MAVAs support in 2019), in **Albanian and Macedonian**.

As highlighted in the graphic below, although English remains the main language used by organizations applying for small grants in the Mediterranean Basin, the other languages are largely represented. This is particularly the case for Arabic in Libya, French in Morocco and Tunisia, and Slavic languages in the Balkans (Albanian has been used only recently). The ability of the RIT to work in multiple languages is clearly an asset for widening access to CEPF funding for smaller, local organizations all over the Mediterranean Basin, a rare opportunity in the current landscape of donors in the region.



## 6.2 Grant-making and Support to Civil Society Organizations

To generate feed-back, and in absence of any face-to-face meeting for the mid-term assessment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an-online survey was sent to all grantees – large and small. The survey was organized around five themes: i) contracting, ii) implementation, iii) safeguards and gender, iv) finance and administration, and v) general comments. The survey was anonymous, to ensure open and honest responses. The response rate was over 80%.

As regards **finalization of proposals and contracting**, grantees appreciated the support from the RIT and CEPF (more than 90% satisfied). The process was found easy by 43% of grantees (39% find it neither easy nor difficult, and 17% difficult). Nevertheless, the proportion varied among sub-regions, with organizations from North Africa finding the process more difficult than those in the Balkans, which is an indication of the difference in terms of capacity between these sub-regions, and calls for more support in North Africa. Overall, the ConservationGrants online platform was found easy to use by 60% of the users (40% found it neither easy nor difficult).

Regarding **financial management and administration**, the grantees, large or small, rated CEPF’s processes (budgeting, procurement, reporting) as around 60% easy and 30% “neither easy nor difficult.” They appreciated the support from CEPF secretariat (large grants) or RIT (small grants), even if about 40% of small grantees and 50% of large grantees would like to have more trainings.

About 60% of projects trigger at least one **safeguard policy**, mostly for involuntary restriction of access to natural resources (i.e., projects working, directly or indirectly, on protected areas or enforcement of measures for protection of wildlife). Although the grantees recognized the usefulness of safeguard measures, less than 40% find the documentation easy to fill. Several questioned the format of the regular reporting on safeguard, and about 75% would appreciate more support and training on the matter.

As regards **gender**, the vast majority of grantees found the gender tracking tool (a brief self-assessment tool) both easy to fill and useful (less than 10% reported the tool difficult). For large grantees, on the 20 organizations who elaborated on gender promotion in their comments, 75% described having taken some actions, which indicates that the self-assessment drives at least some organizations to engage more on gender. Nevertheless, 37% of all grantees admitted never (or rarely) using sex-disaggregated indicators for monitoring. A large majority of grantees appreciated CEPF support and guidance on gender (around 75% rate it good or excellent), and 52% of large grantees and 42% of small grantees asked for more training on the subject.

Generally speaking, the grantees were satisfied with the **support** provided by the CEPF Secretariat on programmatic (74% very satisfied, 18% satisfied) and administrative (60% very satisfied, 40% satisfied) matters. For small grants, the rate of satisfaction with the RIT reached 73% very satisfied and 27% satisfied. The grantees appreciate the direct relationship with CEPF, and the openness of discussions. Some respondents encouraged CEPF to maintain a differentiated approach ("one size does not fit all") to allow for a diversity of organizations to be supported, and to be cautious not to make financial and administrative procedures too complex. They also encouraged CEPF to continue supporting organizations in their fundraising efforts!

A summary of the findings of on-line survey will be produced by the end of 2020 and shared online with the CEPF community.

### 6.3 Communicating about CEPF

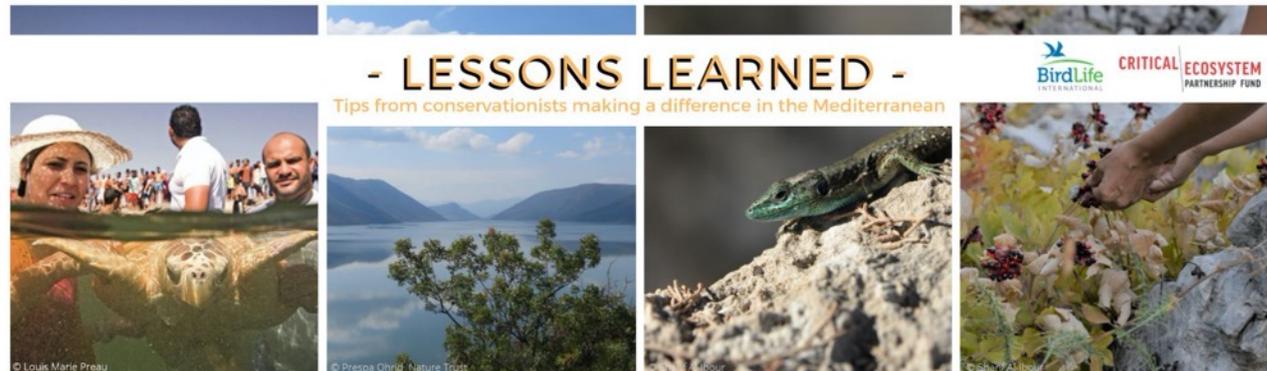
The RIT and CEPF Secretariat have been communicating via email, in person during meetings and events (Wild Rivers Conference, Mediterranean Plant Week, Mediterranean Donors Round-Table etc.), via the CEPF [newsletter](#), social media, country factsheets, RIT quarterly e-bulletins, and other channels of information through partners. The calls for proposals have been announced in multiple languages to the contact list of over 1,000 people. Key forms including technical forms have also been translated into different languages (e.g., gender toolkit in Arabic).

The RIT Facebook page has more than 2,500 followers, and more than 1,200 people follow the Twitter page. Since the inception of the second phase of the CEPF investment in the Mediterranean hotspot, the RIT published **four feature articles** in the BirdLife Magazine, and **30 news articles** (including new calls for proposals) on their website, in multiple languages:

<https://www.birdlife.org/news/tag/cepf-med>

Additionally, they launched a special page for articles that capture **lessons learned** to share with CEPF grantees and other conservation practitioners in the hotspot:

<https://www.birdlife.org/news/tag/lessons-learned>



The overarching key messages, illustrated by the most successful stories, were the following:

- Biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean hotspot has improved and been given greater awareness through CEPF
  - ⇒ [www.birdlife.org/africa/news/libya%E2%80%99s-environment-insiders-view](http://www.birdlife.org/africa/news/libya%E2%80%99s-environment-insiders-view)
  - ⇒ [www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/plan-action-prespa-trout-now-pipeline](http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/plan-action-prespa-trout-now-pipeline)
- Civil society in the Mediterranean Hotspot has been made stronger with CEPF –delivering successful projects and improved organizational capacity
  - ⇒ [www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/battle-keep-albanias-protected-areas-protected](http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/battle-keep-albanias-protected-areas-protected)
  - ⇒ [www.birdlife.org/middle-east/news/capacity-building-nature-conservation-civil-society-organisations-libya](http://www.birdlife.org/middle-east/news/capacity-building-nature-conservation-civil-society-organisations-libya)
- CEPF’s niche is to provide the right support and funding to entrust conservation to local grassroots organizations
  - ⇒ [www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/big-boost-grassroots-conservation-balkans](http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/big-boost-grassroots-conservation-balkans)
  - ⇒ [www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/victory-montenegros-bird-paradise](http://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/victory-montenegros-bird-paradise)
- “The diversity of species is the key to resilience in a habitat; so too the diversity of people and projects is key to the sustainability of conservation”
  - ⇒ [www.birdlife.org/middle-east/news/middle-east-between-fact-and-fiction](http://www.birdlife.org/middle-east/news/middle-east-between-fact-and-fiction)
  - ⇒ <https://www.birdlife.org/raso-lark>
- “Grantee’s Accomplishments Take Root in Lebanon. USJ makes tremendous progress protecting threatened flowers”
  - ⇒ <https://www.cepf.net/stories/grantees-accomplishments-take-root-lebanon>

## 7. Preliminary Impact Summary

At the time of the mid-term assessment, only a handful of projects have been completed, and therefore, assessment of the program's impacts so far is difficult. Impacts could be properly measured only at the end of projects (when grantees submit their final completion reports) and, sometimes, even some years thereafter. This section, therefore, provides a global overview of expected impacts, based on projects' objectives, and highlights for each of the regional expected outcomes, as included in the logical framework of the ecosystem profile, whether the program appears to be on-track or not.

As regards **biodiversity conservation** impacts:

- **KBAs with strengthened management.** The initial target was 45 KBAs with strengthened management, covering 1,000,000 hectares. In spite of not being able to invest in Algeria, Turkey and Egypt, CEPF is currently supporting conservation action in 60 individual KBAs totaling about 1.5 million hectares. While not all projects will actually result in strengthened management, and not all of them will cover entire KBAs, the portfolio could be considered on track regarding this target. Nevertheless, the situation is different when looking at specific targets per strategic direction: under SD1, the target of 25 KBAs cannot be achieved, as eight of them are situated in countries where CEPF cannot invest I (Algeria, Egypt and Turkey).
- **New Protected Areas declared.** The CEPF target is set at eight sites, covering 120,000 hectares. Currently, CEPF grantees are working at 11 sites. However, most of the sites are of small size (for instance for micro-endemic plants) which could make the target of 120,000 hectares hard to achieve. A possibility exists if some marine protected areas could be gazetted (as they tend to be generally of larger size), but official recognition can take time.
  - During Phase II, CEPF celebrated the official gazettal of two protected areas as a result of efforts undertaken by grantees in Phase I: Babour National Park (Algeria) covering 30,000 hectares and Ulcinj Salina covering 1,500 hectares. These two examples demonstrate that a long time is often required to get measurable results in terms of new protected areas!
- **Species conservation.** In comparison with the first phase of CEPF investment in the Mediterranean Basin, the current strategy sets clear targets as regards species conservation, with expected positive trends (at site level) for 30 globally threatened species. Currently, CEPF grantees have declared to work on 102 globally threatened species. Not all projects will be successful, and some will not be in a position to assess/monitor results by the end of the project, so this figure is expected to decrease when projects will report on their impacts. However, progress can be considered to be largely on track as regards species conservation outcomes.
  - About 40% of the globally threatened species for which positive impact is expected are plants—not taking into account many micro-endemic plants, which have not yet been assessed by IUCN. The success of SD4 therefore contributes largely to the species targets, and the objective of 12 threatened plants seeing their status improving will be achieved without any doubt.
  - The species target related to SD3 (cultural landscapes) appears more difficult to achieve as there are fewer globally threatened species dependent on human-built

landscapes, even if traditionally managed. Assessments performed through small grants in 2019-2020 will help identify adequate species targets for this SD.

As regards **strengthening civil society**, the objective is to engage at least 60 organizations (45 local/national) in conservation action based on the ecosystem profile. As of June 2020, CEPF is supporting 68 organizations, of which 59 are national/local organizations. In terms of networks and partnership, many initiatives can be seen to be emerging, mostly at site level, and in some cases at national level. The regional networking element is not currently well covered.

In terms of **human well-being**, the main objectives lie with SD2 (Freshwater, 20 communities getting economic benefits) and SD3 (2,000 people benefiting from maintenance of traditional practices).

- While many projects under SD2 are working with local communities and stakeholders, measurable impacts in terms of economic benefits might be hard to assess, at least in the short term. For instance, several projects intend to promote sustainable fishing practices to ensure long-term availability of fish. While this is positive and often supported locally, there might not be any direct economic impact in the short run (and in some cases, even reduced incomes in comparison with unsustainable, destructive practices). This indicator might thus need to be revised to also consider preservation of economic resources in the long term, rather than direct, short-term economic benefit
- The livelihood objective under SD3 is far from being achieved, due to the limited number of active projects. As CEPF does not yet have experience with cultural landscape projects, the potential economic impact of projects is hard to evaluate and it is not possible to evaluate for sure whether the objective could be reached.

Concerning **enabling conditions**, several projects are currently working on policy influencing, under each strategic direction. The more detailed objectives, per strategic direction, appear to be achievable in the years to come. With additional support from the MAVA Foundation, developing options for a sustainable funding mechanism for small grants in the Balkans will be a major objective in the coming two years.

More detailed information on individual targets are presented in Annex 1, progress against targets in the logical framework.

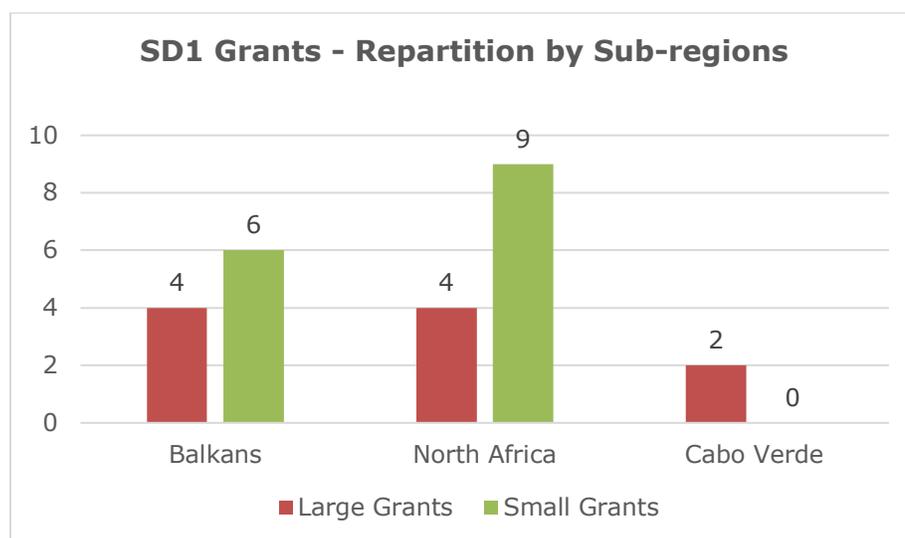
## 8. Investment Highlights by Strategic Directions

The objective of this section is to provide a brief summary of the situation regarding implementation of the CEPF strategy for each strategic direction, and to highlight successes and challenges to be taken into account for refining the strategy for 2020-2022.

### 8.1 Strategic Direction 1 - Coastal Areas

This strategic direction had been envisaged as a continuation of the investment in the first phase (2012-2017) and as such, a call for large grants was launched early in the investment phase, at the beginning of 2018, allowing for first projects to be granted in the summer of that same year. To complement the portfolio, another call was launched for small grants in June 2018, allowing for Small Grants to be active during the winter of 2018/2019.

At the time of the mid-term assessment, 25 projects were active under this strategic direction, representing about 80% of the initial budget allocated.



The large grants focus more on Protected Areas management and co-management, and integrated coastal zone management. In particular, important grants were awarded in the Balkans and Tunisia on coastal wetlands, habitats that are facing major threats due to infrastructure development. Many beneficiaries of the large grants are major national organizations, most of which were already CEPF grantees in the first phase (sometimes as small-grant recipients), which is part of CEPF's commitment to build the capacities of these organizations in the long run. The small grants' primary focus has been on species conservation action and/or science (inventories, monitoring of species, etc.) and local action.

All five grants in Libya are small grants under Strategic Direction 1. The use of small grants has been favored for Libya, because of their flexibility and the limitation in terms of financial risk in this country, where the security situation is at stake. The grants focus on two clusters, one on Karaboli, the other on Farwa. In both places, the organizations work with their own grants, but in a complementary manner, which helps build a spirit of collaboration and creates the core of a conservation community that CEPF expects to grow in the country. The RIT has been very active in Libya, conducting a series of hands-on focused workshops around specific needs of grantees, covering different elements from the Theory of Change to completing the application forms, some being implemented in partnership with a EU-supported project led by WWF North Africa.

In February 2020, CEPF initiated a pilot call for proposals under this strategic direction, specifically targeting the private sector. The main idea is to complement a large grant provided to NGO "Petites Iles de Méditerranée" which works in conjunction with a local organization, ASPEN, to support conservation actions at the marine Protected Area of Zembra et Zembretta Islands. The objective is to provide very small grants (up to \$ 8,000) to local private sector companies which would engage in activities that contribute to Protected Area management plan – such as sustainable fishing, removing of ghost nets, promotion of ecotourism or local, biodiversity-friendly products. The call raised interest and produced 17 responses, out of which three proposals are currently considered. This initiative provides interesting lessons learned for potential replication in other areas.

## **8.2 Strategic Direction 2 – Freshwater Biodiversity**

CEPF is supporting, as of June 2020, 15 projects on SD2 in this second phase of investment in the Mediterranean Basin, for a total of US\$824,138. The portfolio consists mainly of large grants, with only two small grants, although several small grants proposals are currently being processed and should start in the summer of 2020.

Most of the projects are based in the Balkans (11 projects, for more than 70% of the total budget). Four large grants have been awarded to North African organizations, mostly in Morocco (three grants). About 80% of the initial envelope for SD2 has been committed to date, leaving a bit less than US\$ 500,000 for this strategic direction at the time of the mid-term assessment.

A large portion of the projects focus on site-level action, consisting of knowledge-based activities (research, inventories and assessments, monitoring), awareness raising and sensitization, and local conservation measures. This follows the strategy approved in the ecosystem profile to respond to the knowledge gap, which impedes conservation action, with an overall objective to raise the profile of freshwater biodiversity in the region.

Lesser-known taxa, which are not often targets for conservation action, have been selected by a wide range of local partners: with actions in favor of molluscs, crustaceans, amphibians, and freshwater plants, among others. In Morocco, RESING works on *Margaritifera marocana*, a freshwater mussel and *Heideella sp. nov. "valai"*, a snail about which little is known yet; both species are Critically Endangered but have never benefitted from conservation action. The Centre de Développement de la Région de Tensift is focusing on several species of *Giustia* snails, endemic to small river basins, some of which are also Critically Endangered. The investment under this strategic direction could therefore have a strong conservation impact through local action.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to a certain extent in Albania and Morocco, it can be expected that the grantees, who are engaged in collaborative actions or can develop synergies, could get a larger influence on freshwater policies. The CEPF strategy for this SD, to build capacity on freshwater biodiversity conservation and raise the legitimacy of civil society at local level, appears to be adapted to the situation. Naturally, the actual impact will only be measurable in the coming two years, when the projects (most of them signed in 2019 or early 2020) will be more advanced or completed.

### **8.3 Strategic Direction 3 - Cultural Landscapes**

This strategic direction has been designed in close partnership with the MAVA Foundation, which implements a Mediterranean program on this topic. It was initially designed to cover four corridors, but due to Turkish authorities' decision not to allow CEPF investment in the country, this initial list was reduced to three corridors:

1. The Orontes Valley and Levantine Mountains, which cover parts of Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine (Palestine has only been eligible since November 2019).
2. The Atlas Mountains in Morocco.
3. The Dorsal and Telian Atlas, covering mostly Algeria and Tunisia (noting that due to political events, Algeria hasn't yet endorsed the ecosystem profile, impeding CEPF investment until now).

CEPF launched a first call for proposals in June 2018 calling for large grants in Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia and Morocco. Most of the concept notes were not responding to the objectives of the Ecosystem Profile. Typically, CEPF received two types of LOI:

- LOIs by development/agricultural organizations, focusing on organic farming or permaculture, but with very limited interest in (and expected impact on) biodiversity – at least not on threatened biodiversity;
- LOIs by environmental organizations, understanding the biodiversity element, but with limited convincing propositions in terms of involving farmers or working on value-chains of agricultural products.

As a consequence, this initial call resulted in only two large grant projects, which took a very long time to be finalized: one in Tunisia on hedgerow landscapes, another one in the High Atlas (Toubkhal) of Morocco on pastureland. Two other organizations were granted a small grant to prepare a large grant proposal: one in Lebanon on old olive groves, and the other in Morocco on pastureland and grazing. From these two, one resulted in a grant recently approved in Lebanon, while the other one is being finalized. CEPF therefore expects to have four large grants active by the end of June 2020.

In parallel, CEPF launched another call for proposals (small grants) for projects designed to bridge the knowledge gap as regards relationships between traditional agricultural practices and the conservation of rare, threatened species. One proposal was selected in each eligible country for this strategic direction, i.e., Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. These projects involved consultations with local stakeholders and resulted in reports presenting options for potential actions that CEPF could support in the future.

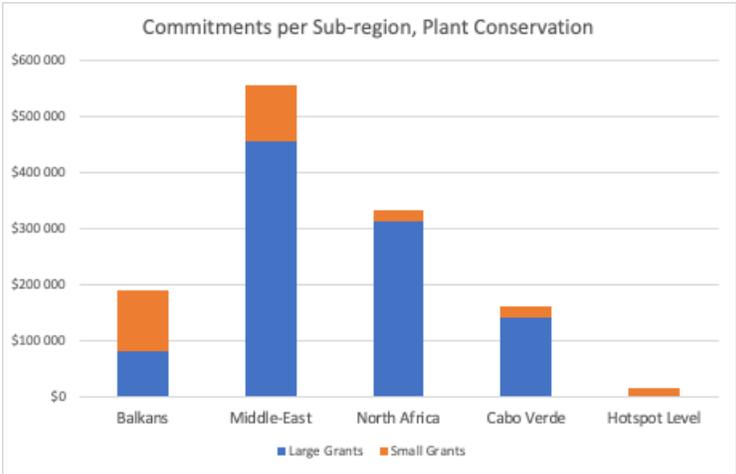
The total budget committed at current stage under this strategic direction is US\$488,000 representing about 20% of the initial envelope of US\$2,350,000.

### 8.4 Strategic Direction 4 - Plant Conservation

The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot is defined primarily on the basis of the presence of its unique botanical communities, with an exceptionally high number of endemic plants. While plants will benefit along with other species from CEPF investments under the other strategic directions, the level of threat and the lack of attention to the specific conservation needs of plants to date justify a separate strategic direction focused on this group. In addition to supporting direct action for the conservation of plants, projects under this strategic direction will also contribute to strengthening the botanical knowledge and skills of scientists, conservationists and land managers within the region.

CEPF has launched four calls for proposals related to SD 4. Generally speaking, the response from civil society has been very strong, with multiple proposals from all countries (but Libya), exceeding the initial CEPF expectations: there were concerns about the interest this SD would raise from civil society, noting that only about six projects out of 108 focused on plants in the first phase. The responsiveness of civil society is therefore a clear indication of the rising interest for plant conservation in the Mediterranean Basin, that CEPF could support. It is also a demonstration of how a specific "funding window" can help steering conservation efforts.

CEPF is supporting, to date, 21 projects in the Mediterranean Basin under SD4, for a total of US\$1,250,000 – already exceeding the envelope of US\$1,100,000, which was already raised from initial US\$900,000 thanks to the support from the MAVA Foundation in the Balkans.



Only two small grants have been provided to international organizations, and therefore local/national organizations represent 97% of the investment on plant conservation – which may be linked to the focus given on in situ conservation action, at site level – which suits smaller, local groups better.

The Middle East gets a large portion of the funding for SD4—with six grants and a total of US\$515,000—which is a reflection of the importance of this region as a center of endemism for plants (in particular geophytes). One also has to consider that this sub-region is not eligible for funding under the SD 1 (Coastal Areas) nor under SD2 (Freshwater). In the Balkans, small grants have been a preferred vehicle for supporting local civil society. Action in this region often relies on voluntary work from plant enthusiasts.

In Lebanon, the **American University of Beirut** supports the integration of plant conservation into the management of areas protected for their cultural heritage. By guiding vegetation management of such areas, the project aims to ecologically restore habitat patches in the UNESCO World Heritage Center of Byblos, and reverse ecological succession, so that habitats conducive for the persistence of rare endemic plants can be encouraged. **Saint-Joseph University** is also piloting such “*circum situ*” conservation action in the archeological sites of Tyre and Anjar. Through these pilot projects, it is expected that endangered plants could find a safe haven in the long run, in sites initially protected for their cultural value plays a growing role for preservation of Lebanon’s natural heritage.

## 8.5 Strategic Direction 5 - Regional Cooperation and Networks

With the exception of one small grant (US\$0,000) to support participation to a conference on marine protected areas, there has been no investment under this strategic direction so far. Initially, some thematic workshops should have been organized as part of the mid-term assessment but were cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis.

## 9. Priorities for July 2020-October 2022

### 9.1 Geographic Focus

The Mediterranean Hotspot is marked by its vast geographical coverage, calling for specific attention to keep a regional balance, and by sometimes difficult geopolitical situations. The 2017 ecosystem profile envisioned a CEPF investment in 13 Mediterranean countries: all the non-EU countries, with the exception of Syria for obvious security reasons. Nevertheless, this initial plan was soon thwarted by the decision of **Turkey** not to endorse the profile, in spite of many discussions with Turkish authorities, including two high-level visits by CEPF Executive Director, Olivier Langrand.

In parallel, the endorsement of **Algeria** has been delayed for the last two years. Although Algeria was eligible under CEPF's first investment phase in the hotspot, the endorsement process needed to get clearance from several ministerial bodies – a situation which was anticipated. But the political situation in Algeria, with pending presidential elections and social demonstrations (the "*Hirak*"), soon presented a challenge for establishing a dialogue with authorities on support to civil society. Several meetings scheduled between CEPF and Algerian authorities were cancelled, and the turn-over in Ministerial departments hindered the Secretariat's capacity to establish proper communication channels. At the current stage, the prospects for securing the endorsement appear limited.

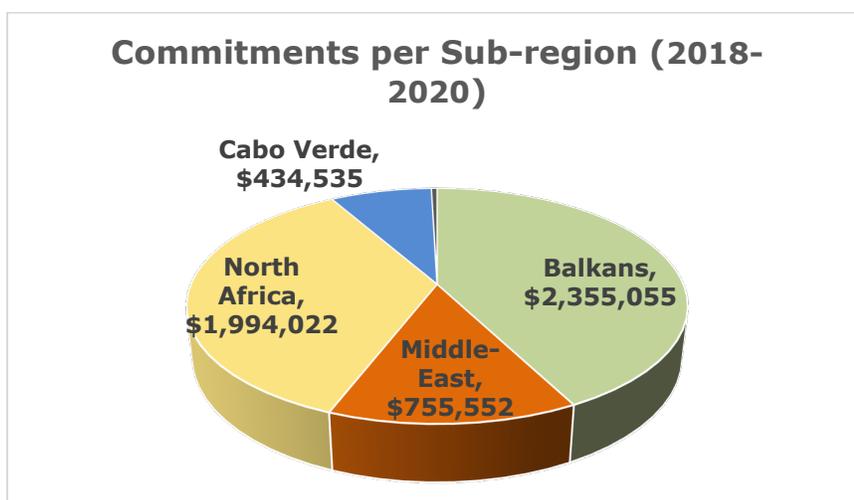
The situation in **Egypt** is slightly different. In July 2018, the Egyptian authorities, represented by Mohammed Shebab Abdel Wahab, Chief Executive Officer of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) and GEF Focal Point, endorsed the ecosystem profile, hence allowing CEPF to support civil society in the country. However, the actual process to secure funding for national organizations has not been cleared by the Egyptian authorities, in spite of several requests for meetings. As such, CEPF is not in a position to launch calls for proposals and grant projects to national organizations. Under this situation, CEPF action in favor of Egyptian civil society has been limited to supporting participation of Egyptian partners to trainings organized in the region, i.e. for a workshop on plant conservation organized in Jordan.

While investment in these three countries has not been able to move ahead, CEPF moved on with opening investment in **Palestine**. Following the decision of the CEPF Donor Council at its 35th meeting, in October 2019, and subsequent endorsement by the Palestinian Authority in November of the same year, CEPF has been able to invest very quickly in this part of the hotspot. CEPF issued a call for small grants in December 2019 and the first grants were awarded in April 2020. There are currently four active projects, with a focus on plant conservation, in this territory.

As regards CEPF's strategy for countries of investment, for the 2020-2022 period:

- i. CEPF will not pursue efforts to secure an Endorsement Letter in **Algeria**, as time wouldn't allow for launching projects in this country. CEPF will continue informing Algerian authorities to maintain the relationship.
- ii. CEPF will not pursue efforts to find an agreement with Egyptian authorities for direct granting in **Egypt**, but will seek alternative options for training and capacity building of Egyptian experts and partners, through granting to non-Egyptian organizations.
- iii. CEPF will expand support to local civil society organization in **Palestine**, based on the good results of the first call and clear needs expressed by the conservation community; specific support action will be envisaged for civil society organizations.
- iv. For **Libya**, CEPF will continue direct support to local civil society organizations, through Small Grants and inclusion of Libyan partners in regional programs and projects, with precautionary measures to address security issues.
- v. CEPF will start discussions with the CEPF Working Group and Donor Council to explore potential support to **Syria**, where needs are immense, maybe through the model for Egypt (i.e., no direct investment but capacity building support to organizations through grants to non-Syrian partners) and at a later stage, based on evolution of the situation, through the model used in Libya. This could represent a first step for future, post-2022 investment in this country.
- vi. For the other countries, no changes are expected in the 2020-2022 period.

In terms of geographical coverage (see graph on the next page), the Balkans represent about 42% of total investment, which is in part a reflection of the additional funding provided by MAVA in 2019 to support this sub-region, as well as of the dynamism and higher capacities of organizations in this region. North African countries follow, with 36% of total investment, a figure that is a bit lower than initially expected but that reflects the inability of CEPF to invest in Algeria. The Middle East is operating at the expected level of investment (US\$0.75 million) with a gap in Jordan, and, finally, there is Cabo Verde with US\$0.43 million. Only two small grants have been allocated for hotspot-level projects. The balance between sub-regions, and between countries within these sub-regions, is globally satisfying.



As regards balance between sub-regions and countries, for 2020-2022:

- vii. CEPF will continue supporting all countries currently eligible, with an emphasis on North Africa for large grants, and looking for options to reinforce investment in Jordan (SG).
- viii. CEPF will try to support more sub-regional and pan-Mediterranean initiatives (hotspot-level grants), to strengthen sharing of experience, scaling-up and to allow for a greater participation of Egypt and Libya.

The changes in the geographical scope of CEPF investment—highlighted above—are making a great difference as regards the fund’s conservation targets, and more generally the objectives that were set in the ecosystem profile. Similar issues happen for other strategic directions – **calling for an adaptation of targets, and/or inclusion of new priority sites for CEPF investment.** Such changes will be presented in the section on each strategic direction, below.

## 9.2 Strategic Direction 1 - Coastal Areas

The conservation targets for Strategic Direction 1 should be modified to reflect the changes in terms of eligible countries. Initially, 31 coastal KBAs were prioritized for investment, but with situation in Algeria, Egypt and Turkey, CEPF can only invest in 17 of them; this makes the target of improving management in 25 KBAs practically unachievable. As a consequence, the eligible sites (coastal KBAs) should also be modified to allow for new projects to be initiated where promising. On the other hand, the evolution of the situation calls to de-prioritize a few sites from priority list (as already benefitting from support from other donors or for security reasons).

Two conservation targets relate to species, leading to some confusion, as one addresses ‘reduced pressure’ and the other ‘improvement of status’. Also, one tackles ‘threatened species’ (which could be interpreted as nationally threatened, under a national Red List) and the other ‘globally threatened species’—while in many cases the two could be different, considering gaps in global IUCN assessments. CEPF will merge these two targets under one heading.

Former Indicators	New Indicators
Reduced pressure from unsustainable practices (hunting, fishing, over-harvesting) on at least 10 globally threatened species for which it is a significant threat.	Improvement of status at local level (i.e., short-term increase in population and/or reproduction success) for at least 10 globally threatened species in coastal KBAs
Improvement in the status (i.e., short-term increase in population and/or breeding success) of at least 15 threatened species in at least 20 priority coastal KBAs.	

ix. Targets for Strategic Direction 1 are modified as follow:

*Target 1.1: Multi-stakeholder approaches lead to improved management of at least 17 priority coastal KBAs, covering at least 600,000 hectares*

*Target 1.4 and 1.5 merged in a unique target: Improvement of status at local level (i.e., short-term increase in population and/or reproduction success) for at least 10 globally threatened species in coastal KBAs*

x. Priority sites for CEPF investment are modified, as indicated in table below.

### Coastal KBAs prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 1, following Mid-Term Assessment

Country	KBA code	KBA name
Sites from the ecosystem profile (2017), maintained as eligible sites		
Cabo Verde	CPV08	Costa de Fragata
Cabo Verde	CPV25	Santa Luzia Island
Albania	ALB18	Saranda Bay - Butrint National Park
Albania	ALB21	Skadar Lake - Buna River - Velipoje-Vau i Dejes
Albania	ALB24	Vlora Bay - Karaburun Penninsular - Sazani Island - Çika Mountain
Montenegro	MNE01	Bojana Delta
Montenegro	MNE05	Katici, Donkova and Velja Seka
Morocco	MAR46	Parc National de Souss-Massa et Aglou
Tunisia	TUN03	Archipel de Zembra
Tunisia	TUN07	Îles Kuriat
Tunisia	TUN32	Golfe de Boughrara
Tunisia	TUN61	Sebkhet Sejoumi
Libya	LBY06	Farwa
Libya	LBY11	Karabolli
Sites from the ecosystem profile (2017), no field projects envisioned (Egypt)		
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>EGY06</i>	<i>Omayed Biosphere Reserve</i>
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>EGY07</i>	<i>Ras El Hekma Coastal Dunes</i>
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>EGY09</i>	<i>Sallum Gulf</i>
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>EGY10</i>	<i>Western Mediterranean Coastal Dunes</i>
New sites for 2020-2022		
Albania	ALB22	Shkumbin - Divjakë - Seman
Tunisia	TUN29	Îles Kerkennah
Tunisia	TUN30	Îles Kneïss
Tunisia	TUN32	Île de Djerba
Cape Verde	CPV 07	Cruzinha da Garça
Cape Verde	CPV 08/09	Falésias costeiras entre Porto Mosquito e Baía do Inferno; Falésias costeiras entre Porto Mosquito e Baía do Inferno – Marinha
Cape Verde	CPV 23	Parque Natural do Norte do Maio
Cape Verde	CPV 24/11	Praias da Ilha de São Nicolau / Ilha de São Nicolau - Marinha

## **Adaptation of Approach**

During first half of the investment phase, CEPF has mostly supported two types of projects:

- Projects with focus on coastal wetlands
- Projects on marine protected areas (in particular supporting co-management with civil society)

CEPF has therefore covered Investment Priority 1 (Engage local stakeholders in conservation action) well. Great pilot initiatives have started which relate to Investment Priority 2 (Engage private sector to adopt sustainable practices), for instance in Tunisia and Cabo Verde, which could be strengthened and reproduced in other sites or countries. Finally, as expected, a relatively small number of projects are addressing priority 1.3 (Engage with governments to mainstream biodiversity in coastal zone management), which has always been a more difficult theme, on which only well-capacitated and recognized NGOs can work.

Meanwhile, the donor landscape has evolved since Phase I and the ecosystem profile update, in particular with setting-up of the MedFund, a financial instrument to support marine Protected Areas recurrent costs (supported by AFD and the GEF in particular), and the strengthening of MedPAN, the network of marine Protected Areas, which offers support and capacity building to MPA managers. In this context, and considering the limited available budget, it could be important to adapt the strategy and restrict the investment to some specific actions.

Based on feedback from local partners and regional stakeholders, CEPF will narrow the intervention focus, although not changing the Investment Priorities. In particular, CEPF would like to build on the success of pilot projects with the private sector and with local fishermen, to support activities in favor of the sustainable use of marine resources. The focus will be in (or close to) marine KBAs. In parallel, CEPF will continue supporting action in favor of new Protected Areas or promotion of co-management of Protected Areas (which contribute directly to the CEPF global targets). CEPF funding for coastal wetlands will be limited, because these ecosystems benefit in parallel from other funding sources.

In Libya, a country in a turbulent political and security situation, there is now potential for small investment to support organizations in the Western part of the country. From discussions with stakeholders, it also appears that the KBA identification—and prioritization—is not perfect, reflecting the general lack of data on biodiversity. The coastline of Libya is one of the most important of the Mediterranean basin in terms of biodiversity, but also one of the most threatened by non-sustainable fishing practices. Overall, CEPF considers that an opportunistic approach should be envisaged in this country, allowing to support organizations working on biodiversity conservation all along the coast independent of being in KBAs or not, as long as the applicants could demonstrate impact on globally threatened species. This would also provide CEPF with more flexibility to adapt to the changing security and political situation.

- xi. CEPF will focus, during the second half of the investment, on 1. Supporting traditional, sustainable fishing practices, associating local communities with conservation action (in relation with 1.1 and 1.2) and 2. Continue supporting initiatives for the creation of new MPAs or co-management of existing MPAs.
- xii. CEPF will not focus on coastal wetlands – but will continue supporting on-going activities.
- xiii. For Libya, considering the evolution of the security situation and the gaps in KBA identification, CEPF will take an opportunistic approach and allow for investment on the whole coastline of the country, as long as applicant demonstrate impact on globally threatened species.
- xiv. For the Balkans, considering the limited number of eligible sites and the fact that they are not necessary the best places for working on fishing, small grants could be awarded to projects outside of priority areas, as long as they clearly address the protection of globally threatened species (pertaining to Target 1.4).
- xv. For Morocco, only one site was prioritized in 2017 (Souss-Massa), for which a preparatory small grant was provided. CEPF will continue supporting only this KBA as a pilot for Morocco, and use the grant by invitation process to scale-up the work of the small grant.
- xvi. CEPF will call for regional cooperation, at least for North Africa, in particular on shared issues (mobile species, unsustainable fishing practices, etc.)

### **9.3 Strategic Direction 2 – Freshwater Biodiversity**

Initial targets for SD2 are likely to be achieved, in particular as regards the improvement of knowledge in 15 KBAs. The goals on species-based conservation action is also on track. As regards influencing management plans or practices, although results can only be ensured at the end of projects, partner organizations are currently working at policy level on several sites/river basin and the target should be achieved.

One of CEPF’s targets is to ensure community stakeholders in 20 sites receive economic benefits from adopting sustainable practices. Although all projects do include local citizens through participatory processes, the direct benefits (economically speaking) might be harder to measure during the lifespan of project implementation. All projects have been built with strong stakeholder consultation (stakeholder assessments where generally undertaken) and are largely supported by local communities. In several cases, improvement of water quality and preservation of fish stocks is seen as a great added value of the project, but it doesn’t result in direct economic benefits. It is not necessary to revise this indicator, as it incentivizes applicants to look for options to create jobs and generate economic benefits, but the target of 20 sites might be hard to reach.

Overall, the CEPF Secretariat and the RIT do not consider it necessary to revise the targets and indicators from the ecosystem profile.

The interest of local civil society has been very high in the Balkans, leading to a very selective process for attribution of grants. There is, therefore, certainly potential to increase investment

in the Balkans. Nevertheless, considering the necessary balance between sub-regions, a new call for large grants in the Balkans on this theme cannot be envisaged – unless additional funding is secured. CEPF will continue supporting current grantees in this sub-region, including amendment for extension and strengthening of projects. A small budget for small grants will also be secured to support exchanges, regional meetings, advocacy and *ad hoc* small projects.

In Morocco, the interest of local civil society is clearly rising in comparison with CEPF Phase I (2012-2017). The political momentum, with “Maroc Plan Vert”, represents an opportunity for civil society to engage. This governmental policy framework focuses more on water resources (i.e., water quantity and quality available for agriculture and human consumption) and does not demonstrate a clear vision for biodiversity associated with freshwater systems, while the country has a high conservation responsibility (many endemics and threatened species). The role of civil society to balance freshwater management practices to maintain biodiversity could, therefore, be very important in years to come. CEPF will build a coherent portfolio in Morocco, addressing knowledge, site conservation action and advocacy, to make the best use of this momentum.

Although the Middle East was not considered for CEPF investment under this SD, partners in Lebanon have reported major risks to local biodiversity in relation with a growing investment in hydrological infrastructures in this country. CEPF could consider a small investment in Lebanon to help structure civil society to fight for freshwater biodiversity, improve knowledge about sites and species, the ecosystem services provided by natural freshwater bodies, and explore ways for Lebanese organization to benefit from the experience of other Mediterranean countries.

- xvii. Targets, indicators and Investment priorities will remain the same for 2020-2022 period under Strategic Direction 2.
- xviii. For the Balkans, if no other funding is made available to CEPF, CEPF will focus on strengthening current projects, eventually with few additional sub-grants on an *ad hoc* basis.
- xix. The focus for the remaining of the investment period will be on North Africa, with particular attention on Morocco (large and small grants).
- xx. CEPF will open this strategic direction in the Middle East, with a specific focus on Lebanon, to address upcoming issues with regards to hydrological infrastructure.

#### **9.4 Strategic Direction 3 – Cultural Landscapes**

CEPF investment has been limited to date under this strategic direction, for reasons detailed under Section VIII. 3. The gap left by the non-endorsement of Turkey, a country where civil society is more advanced in the cultural landscape approach, will be hard to fill in the remainder of the investment phase. The situation has called for a stronger relationship with the MAVA Foundation, which supports several projects on the Cultural Landscape approach, in EU and non-EU Mediterranean countries. With financial support from the MAVA Foundation, and based on the assessments and outreach activities in the first half of the investment phase, CEPF expects to support five or six more large grants, as well as a few clusters of supporting

small grants, so as to build a coherent portfolio of projects, exploring several cultural landscapes:

- in the Middle East: focus on olive production and high-value agricultural products associated with terrace agriculture (aromatic plants, traditional vegetables and fruits, etc.)
- in North Africa: in Morocco, focus on agropastoral systems and sustainable sheep farming, revival of traditional transhumance and agdal practices; In Tunisia on traditional agro-sylvo-pastoral systems.

In Morocco, CEPF will also open investment for the Rif Mountains, so as to compensate for the impossibility to support corridors in Turkey as initially planned.

The Balkans sub-region was not eligible initially for this strategic direction, and CEPF considers it too late to launch a full-sized grant-making program for the region. Nevertheless, CEPF would like to explore the potential for future action under this theme through a few small grants to document traditional practices and their relationship with biodiversity, the causes for agricultural change, and the potential actions for civil society, following the example developed for the other sub-regions in last two years. CEPF believes that this pilot action could be an important first step for civil society to get more engaged on this theme in the context of the EU adhesion process of several Balkan countries.

Following initial assessments and feedback from stakeholders, it is not easy to find species relying on traditional agricultural practices that are globally threatened, even though the trend is worrying for many species (this can be exemplified by the population of Masked shrike in the Mediterranean, which is decreasing but not yet to a level that would enable IUCN to classify the bird as Endangered). To address this, CEPF will continue to put an emphasis on globally threatened species - but also consider other species of global significance for conservation even if not (or not yet) assessed under the IUCN Global Red List. This could include site-endemics or restricted-range species (see criteria for plants under SD4), species that experts consider at risk although not yet assessed, or species facing a rapid and massive decline.

xxi. Targets for Strategic Direction 3 are modified as follows:

*Target 3.1: At least 600 women and 600 men in at least 15 communities demonstrate improved economic wellbeing through maintenance of traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices (note: from 1000 women and 1000 men in 20 communities)*

*Target 3.3: Status (indicators of population or breeding success) of at least 8 globally threatened species or other species of global significance in terms of conservation, dependent on traditional land-use practices improved at site level*

xxii. Strategic Direction 3 will also be open to the Rif Mountains corridor in Morocco.

xxiii. Strategic Direction 3 will also be open for small, exploratory investment in the Balkans, focusing on one or two cultural landscapes.

xxiv. CEPF will support, through specific grants, the documentation of actions (supported by CEPF as well as by other donors), the promotion of new activities, and lessons learned on biodiversity conservation in Cultural Landscapes.

## 9.5 Strategic Direction 4 – Plants Conservation

The initial envelope for this strategic direction is already overspent by 14%, despite additional funding from the MAVA Foundation in the Balkans, and several proposals are still in the pipeline. Considering the interest of civil society, the biodiversity impact and the absorption capacity, an increase of the budget allocated for this SD should be considered. The targets and indicators will be revised accordingly.

Most of projects are currently focusing on site-level. Additional support for transboundary action, networking and technical training (taxonomy, inventories and conservation biology) could also be considered to complement the investment.

No project on plant conservation has been funded so far in Libya, in spite of the high responsibility of this country for plant conservation. The basic knowledge necessary for conservation action is largely missing, and capacity of local organizations is also a concern. Specific measures to foster investment in plant conservation in this country will be needed, including grants by invitation if necessary. In Palestine, local partners have expressed the need for a more thorough inventory of natural areas, and the improved identification of Important Plant Areas.

xxv. Targets for Strategic Direction 4 are modified as follow:

*Target 4.1:* Status of at least 40 globally threatened plant species improved at the site level (increased population or indicators of breeding success) in at least 8 countries (note from 12 in 4 countries initially)

*Target 4.2:* Improved management practices in at least 20 unprotected sites important for plants (including creation of micro-reserves, etc.) (note: from 8 initially)

*Target 4.3:* At least 16 protected area management plans incorporate specific actions for plant conservation, and at least 20 Protected Area managers demonstrate improved skills and knowledge on plant conservation (note: from 5 PA and 10 managers)

*Target 4.5:* At least 20 young professionals (with gender balance) gain substantial experience in plant conservation (note: from 6 initially)

xxvi. Budget for this strategic direction is increased to allow for additional projects and strengthening of existing projects (see budget revision).

xxvii. For Libya and Palestine, depending on needs, grant by invitation procedures could be used to foster action for plant conservation, in particular as regards knowledge and capacity building of local stakeholders.

xxviii. CEPF will support, through specific grants, regional exchange of experience and capacity building activities, on an *ad hoc* basis (and pending the evolution of the COVID-19 crisis). The use of grants by invitation to seize opportunities would be possible for this purpose.

## 9.6 Strategic Direction 5 – Regional Networks and Cooperation

As discussed in section VIII, this strategic direction has not been used much yet, and was also impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that the portfolio of projects is quite well established, with 69 partners as direct grantees plus a number of sub-grantees and local partners, the time has come to launch more actions under this strategic direction, which will possibly benefit from additional support from the MAVA Foundation. The CEPF Secretariat and the RIT do not consider it necessary to change the initial targets, noting that some might be dependent on the evolution of the pandemic.

- xxix. Targets, indicators and Investment priorities will remain the same for 2020-2022 period under Strategic Direction 5.
- xxx. Based on discussions with stakeholders and members of the Advisory Committee, CEPF will engage in discussions to support two regional networks (in relation to target 5.5): the regional network on Sea Turtle conservation, and the regional network on Mediterranean Forests. Grants by Invitation procedures will be used for these two grants.
- xxxi. CEPF will engage with civil society for conservation planning exercises and CSO platform building in countries where a need has been expressed, such as Tunisia, Cabo Verde, and Palestine.
- xxxii. CEPF will ensure flexibility in the use of this budget line, in particular to respond to specific needs related to the COVID-19 crisis, or other crises if necessary.
- xxxiii. CEPF will also use this budget line to support preparatory action for Long term funding mechanisms, to capture impacts. to document good practices, to design learning tools or to engage new donors in investing in the region.

## 9.7 Budget Realignment for the End of Investment Period

The following table presents the initial budget allocation for each strategic direction, and the new allocation revised following the mid-term assessment. It includes funding from the MAVA Foundation (small grant mechanism in the Balkans, 2019) and additional funding pledged by the MAVA Foundation for 2020-2022.

Strategy	Initial Allocation	Revised Allocation including MAVA pledge
SD1 Coastal Areas	\$2 400 000	<b>\$3 180 000</b>
SD2 Freshwater	\$2 270 000	<b>\$2 480 000</b>
SD3 Cultural Landscapes	\$2 350 000	<b>\$2 070 000</b>
SD4 Plant Conservation	\$900 000	<b>\$1 850 000</b>
SD5 Regional Cooperation and Networks	\$430 000	<b>\$784 018</b>
Regional Implementation Team	\$1 650 000	<b>\$1 650 000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$10 000 000	<b>\$12 014 018</b>

## 10. Conclusion

The CEPF portfolio in the Mediterranean Basin has been progressing quickly in the first two-and-a-half years of investment under this second phase, building on the solid foundation of the first phase (2012-2017). With more than 70 grants awarded for a budget over US\$7.3 million, largely to national organizations, CEPF is making a tangible contribution to the preservation of biodiversity in the Mediterranean Basin. Naturally, some adjustments from the initial strategy set up in the ecosystem profile in 2017 are necessary. The contributions from all stakeholders involved in the mid-term assessment process, from January to May 2020, provide the CEPF Secretariat and regional implementation team with invaluable advice for making the best use of available time and funds to help partner organizations achieve their goals for the protection of biodiversity.

Through the online survey, during a conference call and from previous face-to-face meetings, partners from civil society, governments or donor agencies have frequently highlighted the specific niche and added value of CEPF for conservation. This niche is to support young organizations not only to access funding, but also to get technical advice, to develop their institutional capacity, to become more credible *vis-à-vis* international donors, and to become part of a larger community of CEPF grantees, in the Mediterranean Basin and beyond. In the Mediterranean Basin, where multiple initiatives on biodiversity conservation exist to which international organizations have access, the focus on local and national organizations is even more necessary and will be at the core of CEPF efforts in the coming years. In particular, CEPF will make sure to provide opportunities for civil society to have a voice in the development of environmental policies.



Site of the Old City of Byblos (Jbeil) in Lebanon where Mediterranean culture and nature are preserved.  
© Conservation International/photo by Pierre Carret

## Annex 1: Progress against the Portfolio Logframe, as of June 2020

Objectives	Targets	
Engage civil society in the conservation of globally threatened biodiversity through targeted investments with maximum impact on the highest conservation priorities.	45 Key Biodiversity Areas, covering 1,000,000 hectares, have new or strengthened protection and management.	Currently, projects are on-going on 48 Key Biodiversity Areas. Not possible to assess strengthened protection or management as of yet.
	8 sites, covering at least 120,000 hectares that were unprotected or under temporary protection gain officially declared permanent protected status.	<p>Expected new Protected Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Brava in Cabo Verde</li> <li>➤ Bcharri in Lebanon ;</li> <li>➤ Byblos archaeological site in Lebanon (for plants)</li> <li>➤ Extension of Zembra &amp; Zembretta PA in Tunisia</li> <li>➤ Kuriat Islands</li> <li>➤ Orjen in Bosnia</li> <li>➤ Katic in Montenegro</li> <li>➤ Tulip Sites in Albania</li> <li>➤ Jablanica</li> <li>➤ Naqab in Jordan (Plant special conservation area)</li> <li>➤ Plant reserve in Djerba (Tunisia)</li> </ul> <p>Results of Phase 1 during Phase 2 time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ulcinj Salina (Montenegro)</li> <li>- Babor NP (Algeria)</li> </ul>
	At least 8 initiatives launched with private sector stakeholders resulting in adoption or maintenance of biodiversity-friendly practices.	Not assessable at current time.
	10 land-use plans or land use management practices incorporate provisions for biodiversity conservation (e.g., integrated coastal zone management plans, river basin management plans, agricultural development plans, etc.).	7 on going project on coastal zones, 7 projects on river basins; results yet to be assessed.

	<p>5 partnerships and networks formed among civil society, and with government and communities, to leverage complementary capacities and maximize impact in support of the ecosystem profile.</p>	<p>one project on transboundary action on Lake Orhid, one project on coastal wetlands in Tunisia, Libyan partners organized under an informal platform. Several ideas for networks emerging from partners.</p>
	<p>At least 60 civil society organizations, including at least 45 local organizations, actively participate in conservation actions guided by the ecosystem profile, and increase their capacities to deliver long-term conservation benefits.</p>	<p>68 beneficiary organizations, not including sub-grantees and local partners, implementing conservation project guided by the ecosystem profile, among which 59 are local organizations.</p>

Intermediate Outcomes	Targets	
<p>1. Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the conservation of biodiversity in coastal areas.</p> <p>\$2,400,000</p>	<p>Multi-stakeholder approaches lead to improved management of at least 25 priority coastal KBAs, covering at least 600,000 hectares.</p>	<p>16 KBAs covered by projects (14 priority + 2 non priority)</p>
	<p>At least 8 private sector stakeholders, in at least 4 countries, improve their business practices with positive impacts on biodiversity.</p>	<p>Projects are currently working with 12 small/medium private sector stakeholders in five countries. Results in terms of impacts not yet available.</p> <p>Albania:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ small tourism industry in Karaburun (INCA)</li> <li>➤ Wine industry and organic food Narta (PPNEA)</li> <li>➤ Small ecotourism Narta (PPNEA)</li> <li>➤ Small Ecotourism Butrint PPNEA)</li> </ul> <p>Montenegro:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Small scale ecotourism, diving clubs and sport fishing, Katic (GreenHome)</li> </ul> <p>Cabo Verde.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local small Ecotourism, Taxis, Sal (PB)</li> <li>➤ Small Artisanal Fishing (Biosfera)</li> </ul> <p>Tunisia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ecotourism, pescatourism Kuriat, (NGB)</li> <li>➤ Small Artisanal Fishing, Kuriat (NGB)</li> <li>➤ Small Artisanal Fishing Zembra (PIM/ASPEN)</li> <li>➤ Organic Farming, Sejoumi (RET)</li> </ul> <p>Morocco</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fishing, Mussels, expected 2020, Souss Massa (AGIR)</li> </ul>
	<p>At least 2 mechanisms initiated for the private sector to contribute financially to conservation management costs of priority coastal KBAs.</p>	<p>Albania:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Karaburun; fees from tourism collected to support management</li> <li>➤ Cabo Verde: Restaurants to pay a premium for sustainable fish from the Protected Area</li> </ul>

	<p>Reduced pressure from unsustainable practices (hunting, fishing, over-harvesting) on at least 10 globally threatened species for which it is a significant threat.</p>	<p>Currently projects have specific actions on three species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Albanian Frog</li> <li>➤ Loggerhead Turtle</li> <li>➤ Leatherback Turtle</li>   <li>➤ Date Shell (to be assessed in coming year, expected to be threatened)</li> </ul>
	<p>Improvement in the status (i.e., short-term increase in population and/or breeding success) of at least 15 threatened species in at least 20 priority coastal KBAs.</p>	<p>Currently projects have specific actions on five species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monk Seal</li> <li>➤ Albanian Frog</li> <li>➤ Loggerhead Turtle</li> <li>➤ Leatherback Turtle</li> <li>➤ Dalmatian Pelican</li> <li>➤ Date Shell (while not assessed by IUCN, supposed to be endangered)</li> <li>➤ Limonium sp. Nova in Djerba</li> <li>➤ Bald ibis</li> </ul>
	<p>At least 4 land-use planning and/or integrated coastal zone management processes show better integration of biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>Projects currently working at 7 sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Albania/ Karavasta: preventing massive tourism complex construction / the project was abandoned following advocacy work in fall 2019</li> <li>➤ Albania/ Narta, in Process</li> <li>➤ Albania/Karaburun: in process, integrating coastal plant conservation needs</li> <li>➤ Tunisia: Sejoumi: in process (preventing/improving development on ramsar site)</li> <li>➤ Tunisia: Katic, in process (first MPA to be created in the country)</li> <li>➤ Tunisia: Farwa, in process (first MPA)</li> <li>➤ Cabo Verde: Costa da Fragata, in process</li> </ul>

Intermediate Outcomes	Targets	
<p>2. Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity.</p> <p>\$2,270,000</p>	<p>Knowledge of freshwater biodiversity in at least 15 KBAs in priority Catchment Management Zones (CMZs) improved, documented and shared with decision-makers.</p>	<p>Morocco: 3 Tunisia: 1 Albania: 1 North Macedonia: 2 Bosnia &amp; Hercegovina: 8</p>
	<p>Community stakeholders (e.g., fishers, farmers, etc.) in at least 20 sites in priority CMZs receive economic benefits from adopting practices with positive impacts on biodiversity.</p>	<p>1 in Skadar Lake: 10 local fishermen become guides, 2 engage in patrolling 3 to 4 sites in Bosnia where leisure fishing industry improved</p>
	<p>Improvement in the status (i.e. short-term increase in population and/or breeding success) of at least 12 globally threatened freshwater species.</p>	<p>Projects currently work on 7 species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Albanian Frog</li> <li>➤ Tooth Carp</li> <li>➤ Dalmatian Pelican</li> <li>➤ Ferruginous Duck</li> <li>➤ Greater Spotted Eagle</li> <li>➤ 2 plants <i>Rumex tunetanus</i> (Sejenane, plant species under SD4)</li> <li>- Potential other species in Bosnia, Morocco, Tunisia, Skadar Lake.</li> </ul>
	<p>Management plans and/or practices for at least 4 river basins integrate provisions for biodiversity conservation.</p>	<p>Projects currently work on 7 sections of river basins on development of options to better biodiversity integration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ EL Barrak Tunisia</li> <li>➤ Oued Kheniffra, Morocco , Oued el Abid, Sehb El Majnune (Morocco)</li> <li>➤ Orhid Lake</li> <li>➤ Skadar Lake</li> <li>➤ Dojran Lake</li> </ul>
<p>3. Promote the maintenance of traditional land-use practices necessary for the conservation</p>	<p>At least 1,000 women and 1,000 men in at least 20 communities demonstrate improved economic wellbeing through maintenance of traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.</p>	<p>No progress to date.</p>

of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of high cultural and biodiversity value.  \$2,350,000	At least 6 traditional products that demonstrate positive impacts on biodiversity see a positive market trends (in terms increased production, price, access to new markets) through certification, etc.	One project launched on Olive products (Lebanon), two on sheep products (meat, milk, wool tbd).
	Status (indicators of population or breeding success) of at least 8 globally threatened species dependent on traditional land-use practices improved at site level in at least 3 priority corridors.	No progress to date.
	Local authorities in at least 3 priority corridors recognize the importance of traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices and engage in supporting their maintenance.	No progress to date.
4. Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the conservation of plants that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges.  \$900,000	Status of at least 12 threatened plant species improved at the site level (increased population or indicators of breeding success) in at least 4 different countries.	Currently, projects on-going work on 34 globally threatened species of plants (CR, EN, VU) – assessment of status improvement not yet possible. Note: Projects also work on many site-restricted endemics.
	Improved management practices in at least 8 unprotected sites important for plants (including creation of micro-reserves, etc.).	Projects currently work at 16 unprotected sites in total
	At least 6 Protected Area management plans incorporate specific actions for plant conservation, and at least 10 Protected Area managers demonstrate improved skills and knowledge on plant conservation.	Expected results from on-going projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Morocco: 2 (Talassemthane, Toubkhal)</li> <li>➤ Tunisia: 1 (Dar Fatma)</li> <li>➤ Libya: 1 (Farwa under SD1)</li> <li>➤ Lebanon: 5 Horsh Ehden, Jabal Moussa, Djaj, Byblos, Sarada (potentially 2 more: Anjar, Tyr)</li> <li>➤ Jordan: 4 (Dana, Dermouk, Dbin, Hajnoun)</li> <li>➤ Montenegro: 2 (Orjen, Lobcen)</li> <li>➤ North Macedonia: 2 (Pellister, Jablanica)</li> <li>➤ Cabo Verde: 1 Fogo (potentially 1 more if Brava created, check if Costa Brava)</li> </ul>

		The number of protected area managers is yet to be monitored. Specific actions are ongoing in Lebanon, Jordan and Cabo Verde, Montenegro
	Improved knowledge for at least 35 locally endemic or highly threatened plant species and improved information on plants for at least 15 KBAs.	in Jordan, improved information on 22 sites available  Projects currently work on 35 globally threatened plants plus several site-restricted endemics.
	At least 6 young professionals (at least 3 men, 3 women) gain substantial experience in plant conservation.	On-going projects area currently improving the capacity of 20 young professionals, including at least 7 women. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tunisia, 1 female PhD</li> <li>➤ Morocco, 2 female Master, 1 male young professional</li> <li>➤ Lebanon, 2 female</li> <li>➤ Jordan, 4 male students</li> <li>➤ Cabo Verde: 6 university students (Brava and Fogo)</li> <li>➤ Bosnia, 1 female,</li> <li>➤ Montenegro, 1 female and 1 male</li> <li>➤ Albania, 1 male</li> </ul>
	At least 2 plans adopted at the national level with improved integration of plant conservation needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1 large policy initiative is ongoing in Jordan</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>Targets</b>	
5. Strengthen the regional conservation community through the sharing of best practices and knowledge among grantees	At least 10 local organizations demonstrate increased knowledge of international and regional conservation agreements and take steps to engage in action at the local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1 organization in Tunisia (RET) participated to Ramsar conference and applied learning to site in Tunisia</li> <li>➤ 6 local organizations attended MEDPAN meeting in Turkey</li> </ul>
	At least 5 regional thematic experience sharing events allow for informal and formal networking in the hotspot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ IUCN Plant Week, 6 organizations participated</li> <li>➤ MedPAN meeting on marine protected areas: 6 organizations participated</li> <li>➤ Protected Area Network Forum in Jordan: 4 Libyan NGOs participated</li> </ul>
	Grant support makes a significant contribution to catalyzing or	Ongoing grants are supporting 5 cross-border networking relationships:

<p>across the region.</p> <p>\$430,000</p>	<p>sustaining at least 7 cross-border networking relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Montenegro &amp; Bosnia: Orjen Mountains (Plants)</li> <li>➤ Albania and Greece: Tooth Carp (Fish)</li> <li>➤ Albania &amp; Montenegro: Skadar Lake</li> <li>➤ North Macedonia &amp; Greece: Dojran Lake management</li> <li>➤ Albania and North Macedonia: Orhid Lake</li> </ul>
	<p>Information on at least 15 funding opportunities for civil society disseminated to relevant organizations, resulting in at least 5 successful funding proposals for continuation or extension of CEPF-funded work.</p>	<p>Information disseminated about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The MED Fund</li> <li>- MedPAN Funding</li> <li>- Franklinia Foundation for grantees working on trees</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Supported application of NGB to The MED Fund for recurrent funding</li> <li>➤ Supported Biosfera (Cabo Verde) to get SMILO support (for fishermen)</li> <li>➤ Supported Bado (Libya) to get MEDPAN funding for sea turtles</li> <li>➤ Supported RSCN to get Prince Albert Foundation funding for Yarmouk PA</li> </ul>
	<p>At least 2 regional networks for biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean Basin created or strengthened.</p>	<p>No progress to date</p>
<p>6. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a Regional Implementation Team.</p> <p>\$1,650,000</p>	<p>At least 80% of local civil society organizations receiving grants demonstrate more effective capacity to design and implement conservation actions.</p>	<p>Not assessable yet</p>
	<p>At least 30 grantees show an improvement in gender mainstreaming tracking tool scores over the period of CEPF support.</p>	<p>Not assessable yet</p>
	<p>At least 2 participatory assessments undertaken, documenting lessons learned and best practices from the hotspot.</p>	<p>One participatory assessment undertaken for this Mid-Term Assessment, including on-line survey, in spite of the Covid-19 crisis.</p>
	<p>Performance of the RIT assessed as satisfactory during the mid-term and final assessments.</p>	<p>Mid-term assessment survey score a very satisfactory performance of the RIT</p>

## Annex 2. Active and Closed Grants (Phase 2) as of June, 2020

### Strategic Direction 1: Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Grantee Name	Project Title	Country	Summary	Grant Amount
Fondation Tour du Valat	Suivre la Dynamique de l'Evolution des Habitats Humides de Sebkhath Sejoumi en Tunisie en utilisant le Système d'Information Géographique	Tunisia	Improve knowledge around Sebkhath Sijoumi by setting up a geo-referenced database in Geographic Information Systems, integrating all the maps and indicators that will be produced. This will strengthen the establishment of a broader database on this Key Biodiversity Area, including all the information that will be collected, produced and synthesized.	\$12 330
Vertigo Lab	BlueSeeds: Explorer des méthodes innovantes pour le renforcement des capacités financières et organisationnelles des aires protégées en Tunisie - Pilote sur les Iles Kuriats	Tunisia	Build the capacity of local Tunisian organization Notre Grand Bleu in the medium and long term. Improve financial planning tools and train staff.	\$19 928
Reseau Enfant de la Terre	Participation in COP 13 RAMSAR as part of the project "Promoting the involvement of civil society in the protection process of Sabkhath Sijoumi"	Tunisia	Improve knowledge about Sijoumi wetland situation in international level through the participation to 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. This travel grant allows Reseau Enfant de la Terre to be part of World Wetland Network and youth wetland network.	\$8 325
Réseau Enfants de la Terre	Engager la Société Civile pour la Protection de la Sebkhath Sejoumi, Tunisie	Tunisia	Raise awareness of the importance of Sebkhath Sejoumi Wetland, including the services it provides and the biodiversity it hosts, and engage local community members in the protection of the site.	\$118 478

Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux"	Engager les parties prenantes nationales et internationales pour la conservation de Sebkhet Sejoumi et ses populations d'oiseaux	Tunisia	Analyze the importance of Sebkhet Sejoumi (ecosystem services, biodiversity), prepare alternative options for long-term preservation of the area, and work with national authorities to influence urban planning compatible with protection of site. Raise awareness of local communities and strengthen local organizations.	\$114 644
Initiative pour les Petites Îles de Méditerranée	Vers la Mise en Place d'une Cogestion de l'Archipel de Zembra et du Jbel Haouaria, Tunisie	Tunisia	Create the conditions for an effective management of the Zembra Archipelago Marine Protected Area through ecological assessment and monitoring, strategic planning, establishment of a participatory management structure including all stakeholders, and strengthening local organization ASPEN to engage in co-management.	\$252 318
Notre Grand Bleu	Contribute to Integrated and Sustainable Management of the Coastal and Marine Protected Area of Kuriat Islands, Tunisia	Tunisia	Strengthening the co-management of Kuriat Islands, through a programme to increase capacities of Notre Grand Bleu and the authorities in charge of the Protected Area. Work with local stakeholders to promote good practices in terms of tourism and fishing. Promote the Protected Area, and support monitoring of endangered species.	\$199 114
AGIR Association de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources	Involve Civil Society and Fishing Community in Integrating Biodiversity Conservation in Souss Massa National Park and Tamri Key Biodiversity Area, Morocco	Morocco	Prepare the national action plan for Northern Bald Ibis, a Critically Endangered species. Local civil society organizations and relevant stakeholders are involved actively in order to ensure its sustainability. The project will help to establish a platform for all stakeholders and prepare a conservation project for the better future conservation of the species in Souss-Massa National Parc and Tamri Key Biodiversity Area.	\$19 956
Crnogorsko društvo ekologa [Montenegrin Ecologists Society (MES)]	Inclusion of the Local Community in the Process of Protection and Improvement of the Habitat of the Endangered Skadar Frog in the Bojana Delta	Montenegro	Raise awareness of the rare and threatened Skadar frog (Albanian water frog). The project will work with local communities, children, students, decision makers and other stakeholders in one of the strongholds for the amphibian species – Bojana/Buna river Delta in Montenegro. They will establish monitoring of the species, create conservation guidelines and organize the first Montenegrin "Frog Day."	\$40 000

Zeleni Dom Green Home	Support Local Community's Involvement in Protection and Promotion of the Potential Marine Protected Area – Katič	Montenegro	Building the capacity of and networking local actors to engage in the management of natural resources in the Katic area, and support the first potential marine Protected Area of Montenegro. Supporting ecotourism and livelihood activities based on sustainable use of natural resources. Monitoring of two important flagship species: monk seal and dusky grouper.	\$232 376
Libyan Society for Birds	Fostering Stakeholder Participation in Preparing a Management Plan for Farwa Marine Protected Area	Libya	The project aims to prepare participative management plan for Farwa Marine Protected Area established in 2009. The management plan will be prepared with a participative approach involving local stakeholder and using all previous data. It will address all elements that lead to the achievement of the protection objectives for marine and terrestrial biodiversity	\$19 800
BADO Association for Environment	Establishing Environmental Awareness About the Importance of Farwa Marine Protected Area, Libya	Libya	Protect and conserve biodiversity within the Farwa Marine Protected Area through increased environmental awareness and participatory action. The aim of this project is to organize different awareness campaigns and create environmental clubs within two primary schools in Zwara. Contribute to the elaboration of the management plan to be implemented by Libyan Society of Bird.	\$19 245
Libyan Society of Artisanal Fishery Friends (LSAFF)	Sustainable Fishing in Lake Farwa, Libya,	Libya	Decrease illegal dynamite fishing in order to improve production capacity. A series of workshops will be conducted and will involve relevant stakeholders and artisanal fishermen to help increase understanding regarding the danger of these practices and improve knowledge about the national regulations.	\$19 990
Oxygen association for environmental protection	Establishing a Social Environment Club in Karabolli, Libya	Libya	Create a social environmental club in partnership with the Karabolli municipality in order to increase awareness about the degradation of the site. An innovative idea to bring men and women together to discuss local environmental issues, and the organization of environmental events involving students from local schools.	\$19 955

Libyan WildLife Trust (LWT)	Preparing a Zoning Plan for the Karabolli Area, Libya	Libya	Prepare a participatory zoning plan for the Karabolli Key Biodiversity Area in Libya. The project will evaluate the standing capacity of the site and suggest a plan for the land use with relevant stakeholders and authorities.	\$17 771
Associação Projetos Biodiversidade	Estabelecendo a Gestão Cooperativa da Área Marinha Protegida para Conservar a Área Chave para a Biodiversidade da Ilha do Sal, Cabo Verde	Cabo Verde	Restore marine and coastal ecosystem of Costa de Fragata Key Biodiversity Area on Sal Island, Cabo Verde, through support to the Protected Area management authority, and instauration of co-management practices supported by the local community. Develop partnership with local tourism operators and involve fishermen community to reduce threats on endangered species.	\$155 698
Biosfera 1	Developing a Sustainable Model of Certified Fisheries for the Protection of Santa Luzia Marine Reserve Biodiversity	Cabo Verde	Undertake a pilot study to evaluate options for developing sustainable fishing schemes inside and outside the Marine Protected Area of Santa Luzia, in Cabo Verde. The project will collect key information on the fishing activities, set up a participatory monitoring system and pilot a certification scheme with premium for fishermen adopting sustainable practices. A long-term expected outcome is to improve the conservation status of important fish species (including sharks) in the Protected Areas.	\$138 537
Royal Albania Foundation	Establishing a Rehabilitation and Education Centre for Sea Turtles at Butrint in Saranda Bay, Albania	Albania	Contribute to the wider awareness and protection of sea turtles with local fishermen. Training will be carried out with fishermen on how to rescue injured turtles, and educated about the widespread problem and how to protect them.	\$814
Organizata e Menxhimit të Peshkimit Liqeni i Shkodrës	Working Towards a Sustainable Fishery on the Coast of Velipoja and in Buna Delta, Albania	Albania	Enhance the sustainability of the fishery activities in Velipoja coast and in Buna Delta Key Biodiversity Area, north west Albania. Formalizing the fishery will help improve the conservation status of rare and endemic fish species occurring in this area through their protection. The enforcement of regulations of the fishing activity in the project area will result in licensed fishermen, improved fishing regulations and identification of Fishing Protected Areas.	\$16 300

Archipelagos-ambiente e sviluppo	Sustainability, Threats, Presence and Habitat Use of the Mediterranean Monk seal in Albania	Albania	Contribute to the overall conservation and survival of the Monk Seal by facilitating research and conservation actions in Vlora bay in Albania. Project outcomes will improve the knowledge of habitat availability and presence of the species along the coast of Albania, setting a data baseline on the threats that affect the quality of the monk seal habitat and explore possible mitigation measures.	\$20 000
Social Education & Environment Protection	Engage Key Stakeholders for the Conservation of the Date Shell and its Habitat in the Karaburun Peninsula, Albania	Albania	Create positive synergies between stakeholders for the conservation of the Date Shell and its ecosystem in Karaburun-Sazan Marine National Park in Albania. Project will establish a forum with all stakeholders to raise awareness, discuss, and collect ideas for sustainable ways of managing the coastline of the Marine Protected Area and nearby zones.	\$18 630
Qendra për Ruajtjen e Ekosistemeve Natyrore në Shqipëri (Eco-Albania)	Conserving the Albanian Water Frog in Vlora Bay	Albania	Assess the current situation, threats and necessary conservation measures for the Albanian water frog in Vlora Bay, Albania. The project aims to train local stakeholders in direct conservation actions and techniques for the protection and conservation of the Albanian water frog, and to raise the public's interest the endemic amphibian and the area's biodiversity.	\$20 000
Instituti për Ruajtjen e Natyrës në Shqipëri	From Mountains to the Sea	Albania	Work closely with the authorities in charge of national parks management to ensure participation of all local stakeholders and their engagement for Protected Areas. This include municipalities, tourism operators, academics, and the youth and general public.	\$190 283
Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania	Land of Eagles and Castles: Integrated Participatory Management for Albanian Coastal Biodiversity	Albania	Building upon CEPF funded project "Land of eagles and castles" (2012-2016), PPNEA will strengthen their relationship with local communities and expand support to local small nature-friendly businesses around Narta Lagoon and Butrint National Park, with the objective of ensuring alternative livelihood for local communities while preserving the rich biodiversity of the two unique sites.	\$166 503

Albanian Ornithological Society	Let's Make Divjaka Natural Again!	Albania	Develop alternative options for sustainable economic development, assess the ecosystem services of the wetland complex, associate the local stakeholders in monitoring and conservation actions and raise awareness on the natural heritage of this region of Albania, in order to prevent large tourism infrastructures to be developed within the national park.	\$187 000
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## Strategic Direction 2: Freshwater Biodiversity

Grantee Name	Project Title	Country	Summary	Grant Amount
Association Tunisienne de la Vie Sauvage	Conserver la Biodiversité dulcicole d'Oued Maden à Travers une Cogestion Locale, Tunisie	Tunisia	Improve the knowledge on the freshwater biodiversity of Oued Maden, Tunisia, and assess threats and socio-economic activities impacting on freshwater resources. Based on these studies, work with the river basin authority to adapt its practices for conserving threatened species, and create a local Site Support Group to support long-term monitoring and local action in favor of biodiversity.	\$107 776
Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development	Monitoring and Conservation of Endemic and Endangered Trout in National Park Pelister and Prespa Region, North Macedonia	North Macedonia	Conduct a study on distribution, population size and conservation status of the Prespa trout in three rivers, Brajchinska, Kranska and Leva. Build upon and updating the data from studies conducted before the construction of hydropower plants. Develop a Conservation Action Plan and transboundary collaboration with stakeholders in the Greek part of Prespa. Public awareness and capacity development activities for establishing a long-term monitoring program for the trout	\$23 680

GTI – Geotehnicki Inzenering DOO Skopje	Assessment of an Endemic Freshwater Snail in Dojran Lake – Population Status, Threats and Conservation Measures, North Macedonia.	North Macedonia	Resolve the unknown species status of <i>Graecoanatolica macedonica</i> , the 'near or possibly extinct' freshwater snail in Dojran lake. Establish the population status of other important mollusks. Analysis of water quality and eutrophication pressure. Preparation of the species conservation action plan for the endemic snail. Public awareness of local community about the biodiversity and endemism.	\$28 806
Association for ecology and tourism ECOTOURISM-2016, Ohrid	Preserving Belchishta Wetland, North Macedonia, through Engagement with Municipality and Local Stakeholders	North Macedonia	Design with local municipality and local stakeholders a participatory management plan for the Belchista wetlands, introducing sustainable farming practices and improved land use management. Assess the biodiversity of the wetland, in particular as regards less-known taxa, and initiate process for official protection of the site.	\$112 099
Milieukontakt Macedonia	Enhancing Dojran Lake Unique Biodiversity through Engagement of all Stakeholders and Implementation of Ecosystem-Based Approaches	North Macedonia	Strengthen the protection of Dojran Lake's unique biodiversity by working with all stakeholders involved. Support the local government in mainstreaming conservation needs in local decisions, and work with fishermen and farmers on environment-friendly approaches. Several innovative pilot actions will be tested with locals to improve water quality and fight against invasive species.	\$147 735
Societe Ressources Ingenierie	Promoting Conservation of Freshwater Biodiversity in El Abid's Watershed, Morocco	Morocco	Launch a series of pilot actions in the El Abid region to preserve unique and threatened freshwater species. Following biological assessments and mapping of the last sources and rivers where live critically endangered species (freshwater mussels and shrimps), RESING will initiate pilot actions in coordination with local communities and authorities.	\$147 833
Centre de Développement de la Région de Tensift	Approche Intégrée pour la Conservation de la Biodiversité Aquatique Menacée du Bassin de Sehb El Majnune, Maroc	Morocco	Assess the conservation status of four critically endangered and endangered freshwater snails present on the site Sehb El Majnune, then define and implement with local communities pilot activities to mitigate the threats and stabilize the populations. Create a locally-managed Protected Area to preserve the rare and endangered freshwater biodiversity.	\$120 003

Association Marocaine pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature	Dynamiser le Rôle du Parc National de Khenifra pour la Préservation de la Biodiversité Aquatique de l'Oued Oum Er-Rabia, Maroc	Morocco	Work with the National Park authorities, the River Basin Management Agency and local stakeholders to mainstream freshwater biodiversity conservation needs into water management plans. The project includes a comprehensive study of freshwater biodiversity and its socio-economic importance, and uses participatory approach to develop locally-accepted conservation approaches.	\$155 940
NVO Program za zivotnu sredinu (NGO Environmental Programme)	Enabling Joint Bottom-up Protection and Sustainable Development Planning for Bojana River Basin, Montenegro	Montenegro	Implement novel approaches in data collection on distribution, populations and threats of freshwater biodiversity in Bojana water basin. Assessment of socio-economic values of ecosystem services. Networking, knowledge exchange and awareness raising of local stakeholders through workshops, educative activities and their engagement in protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Designing a strategic direction for the protection of Delta Bojana.	\$30 000
Hrvatsko Društvo za Biološka Istraživanja (HDBI) (Croatian Biology Research Society)	Conservation of the Southern Dalmatian Minnow, Advanced Semi-cave Fish of the Dinaric Karst in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mapping distribution area of rare endemic fish in springs and underwater caves and habitat quality analysis. Implementing eDNA methodology for water sampling and determination of species presence. Producing of publicly available monitoring protocol. Preparing conservation measures for this species and policy for better management of karstic fields. Establishing multistakeholder platform for knowledge sharing and networking of experts and decision makers. Public promotion of endemic fish.	\$24 979
Centar za krš i speleologiju	Distribution, Population and Status of Threats to the Biodiversity of Freshwater snails, Bosnia & Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Conduct a systematic data collection of freshwater snails and water quality analysis on karstic springs and watercourses in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Assessment of population status of certain snail species according to criteria of IUCN Red List of endangered species. Updating database of biological diversity of freshwater snails available to all decision makers in nature conservation and other stakeholders. Organizing educative workshops and lectures for students and school children.	\$22 500

Udruga Dinarica	Conservation of the Steno-Endemic Species Mostar Minnow in Mostarsko Blato, Bosnia and Herzegovina.	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Conduct field research and enhance the knowledge base for the Mostar blato ecosystem and the population of the Mostar minnow ( <i>Phoxinellus pseudalepidotus</i> ). The project implies mapping karst water springs, producing a conservation action plan, proposing protection measures of Mostar blato and engaging decision makers. Mostar blato is damaged by hydropower drainage canals. Project tends to halt further habitat and biodiversity loss and raise awareness through disseminating findings on media.	\$19 974
Udruga Dinarica	Establishing Pillars for Conservation of Endemic Freshwater Biodiversity in KBA Livanjsko Polje and Buško Lake	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Establish the conservation status, research the ecology and management needs for five endangered fish species of the lake and adjacent polje. Prepare communication material and advocate for improved management of the freshwater system. Engage with local stakeholder and organize network of local citizens in favor of preservation of the site.	\$142 410
"Dzemal Bijedic" University of Mostar	Enhancing Knowledge on Biodiversity and Assessing Ecological Status of the Lower Catchments of Neretva River, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Assess freshwater fish species abundance and status in Neretva River Basin, with a focus on rare and threatened species. Launch an information campaign on freshwater heritage of the Neretva Basin and advocate, with local groups (fishermen, farmers, naturalists) for improving conservation of important sites and river basin management.	\$70 556
Centar za zivotnu sredinu	Steps Towards the Protection of Neretva Tributaries: Buna, Bunica, Begava and Trebižat, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Assess freshwater species abundance and status in four Bosnian river basin, with a focus on under-researched taxa. Launch an information campaign and advocate, with local groups (fishermen, farmers, naturalists) for improving conservation of important sites and river basin management.	\$146 923

University of Ljubljana	Developing New Tools for Rapid Assessment of Subterranean Biodiversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Develop new tools to identify and inventorize the rich subterranean biodiversity of the Dinarides region in Bosnia. University of Ljubljana will train Bosnian partner to use new tools, create a shared database and communicate results and subsequent conservation needs to local stakeholders and decision-makers. Visit project website: <a href="http://subbiocode.net">subbiocode.net</a> .	\$149 999
Environmental Citizens' Association "Front 21/42"	Enhance the Transboundary Conservation of the World Heritage Site Lake Ohrid in North Macedonia and Albania	Albania; North Macedonia	Ensure participation of local stakeholders, engagement of civil society organizations and contribution of environmental and legal experts to advocate for a full inclusion of measures in favor of biodiversity in national legislation in North Macedonia. Conduct networking and capacity building with Albanian civil society organizations to strengthen transboundary actions for long-term preservation of Lake Ohrid.	\$151 836
Noé	Empowering Local Community and Stakeholders to Sustainably Manage Skadar lake's Freshwater Biodiversity	Albania; Montenegro	Empower local communities by promoting participatory management of Skadar Lake's biodiversity and develop economic benefits based on the sustainable use of natural resources. Support the eradication of illegal fishing practices threatening freshwater biodiversity, through sensitization and control.	\$172 025
Center for Protection and Research of Birds	SOS Skadar Lake - Keeping the Montenegrin Wilderness Wild	Albania; Montenegro	Increase the knowledge base on the biodiversity of the Montenegrin part of the transboundary Lake Skadar - expanding in particular to amphibian and fish species. Model the impacts of future developments on the lake (in particular hydropower plants and tourism infrastructure) to support decision making on land use and natural resources management. Discuss and share findings with Albanian stakeholders.	\$150 534

Qendra per Menaxhimin Agro-Mjedisore dhe Ekonomik (Agro-environmental and Economic Management Center)	Ecological and Economical Assessment of Ecosystem Services in the Lake Ohrid Catchment, Albania	Albania	Assess the distribution, population and threat status of fishes and others aquatic organisms in freshwater and identify the most threatened areas and species. Conduct bio monitoring of fresh water. Identify ecological and economical values and consequence for the socio-economic development of the rural area. Encourage locals to protect the biodiversity of the Ohrid Lake catchment by familiarizing them with the economic benefits of the ecosystem.	\$29 900
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### Strategic Direction 3: Cultural Landscapes

Grantee Name	Project Title	Country	Summary	Grant Amount
WWF Mediterranean-North Africa	Assessment of landscape cultural practices in Kroumirie and Mogods, Tunisia	Tunisia	Assess the cultural land use practices in Kroumirie and Mogods in Tunisia. Research and document best practices, and develop recommendations for maintaining and restoring traditional land uses for the benefit of biodiversity. Raise awareness among stakeholders to promote and explain the findings of the study, so that future interventions can utilise the knowledge for more sustainable and effective conservation actions.	\$11 221
Exploralis	Promouvoir le Maintien et l'Implantation de Haies Bocagères pour Soutenir la Biodiversité Locale dans la Région de Sogman au Nord de la Tunisie	Tunisia	Promote the role of hedges in biodiversity conservation in northwestern Tunisia. Assess the biodiversity value of hedges and the ecosystem services they provide to local farmers. Demonstrate good practices for maintenance and creation of hedges at a pilot site, disseminate them to local farmers and promote the role of hedges with local authorities.	\$88 003
Association Forêt Modèle Ifrane	Conservation de la biodiversité du parc national d'Ifrane par la réhabilitation et l'adaptation des pratiques agricole traditionnelles ancestrales	Morocco	Revitalize the traditional sheep farming systems of Ait Mhamed and Ait Ben Hcine communities in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Support the communities to set up a sustainable grazing system based on traditional rights, preventing over-grazing in the biodiversity-rich mountains of Ifrane National Park. Establish cooperatives	\$117 930

			for traditional medicinal plants, with regulations for sustainable harvesting.	
Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA)	A Study of Traditional Land-Use Practices and Native Biodiversity in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco	Morocco	Conduct a study to understand the relationship between production landscapes and native biodiversity in the High Atlas, Morocco. The project will focus on the relationship between traditional land use practices and biodiversity and prioritise best practices and recommendations for maintaining and restoring traditional land use.	\$19 910
Association Forêt Modèle Ifrane	Mapping Traditional Farming Practices Benefitting the Conservation of Biodiversity in Ifrane National Park, Morocco	Morocco	Understand the traditional agricultural practices within Ifrane National Park. Create an inventory of traditional practices and land uses within the forest through stakeholder interviews, data analysis and mapping of existing projects. Identify potential practices for the re-establishment and maintenance of land-use patterns, for the promotion of biodiversity conservation and to provide benefits for the local community	\$18 493
Fondation d'Entreprise BIOTOPE pour la Biodiversité	Améliorer l'Organisation et les Pratiques Pastorales dans le Parc National de Toubkal pour une Gestion Durable des Ressources Patrimoniales et des Paysages Traditionnels	Morocco	Study the current situation as regards grazing and biodiversity conservation, in particular for plant taxa in the Protected Area. Engage with local communities and park authorities to develop a charter for improved livestock management practices. Explore marketing options to increase revenues from local products.	\$149 999
Al-Shouf Cedar Society	Assessment of Cultural Practices in the High Mountain Eastern Mediterranean Landscape in Lebanon	Lebanon	Assess the maintenance and sustainability of the traditional land use practices in the high mountain landscape. Support local communities to increase their benefit from biodiversity friendly land-use and agricultural practices. Raise awareness of the value of traditional sustainably land-use practices among local community, private sector and government decision makers	\$18 187
Environment For Life (EFL)	Assessing the Biodiversity Value of Olive Sites in Mount Hermon KBA and Identifying the Environmental Impacts of	Lebanon	Assess the biodiversity value of olive farms in Mount Hermon Key Biodiversity Area and identify the environmental impacts of agricultural practices that are shifting from traditional to new modern practices which	\$20 000

	Various Agricultural Practices		are causing loss of biodiversity associated with traditionally inherited farming schemes.	
Environment for Life	Maintaining the Traditional Land-Use Practices Necessary for Conservation of Olive Associated Biodiversity in Mount Hermon, Lebanon	Lebanon	Support local farmers to adopt or maintain traditional, biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices for olive production on the Mount Hermon area. Train and support local farmers to adopt a "charter" defining good practices, including a hunting ban and measures to preserve flora. Develop a marketing strategy to ensure better prices and access to national markets for olive products following good environmental practices.	\$140 922
Enviromatics - Amjad and Majdi Salameh Company	Land Use Measures to Sustain Traditional Uses of Productive Landscapes in Dibeena Key Biodiversity Area, Jordan	Jordan	Conduct a study to assess the impact of traditional land use within productive landscape in Dibeena Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), Jordan. Raise awareness among communities, stakeholders and decision makers on the need for effective measures to maintain traditional land use. Propose approach and guidelines for effective, responsive and right-based land use planning. Promote traditional land use through encouraging the stakeholders to adopt the proposed planning approach	\$20 000

#### Strategic Direction 4: Plant Conservation

Grantee Name	Project Title	Country	Summary	Grant Amount
Association Tunisienne de Développement Durable: La Recherche en Action (La recherche en Action)	Améliorer des Connaissances sur la Flore de l'île de Djerba et de l'état de Conservation de ses Espèces Patrimoniales	Tunisia	Improve knowledge and conservation of the flora in Djerba Island, especially the endemic <i>Limonium formosum</i> . A participatory plan for the creation of a micro-reserve will be conducted for the conservation of <i>L. formosum</i> . The project will also contribute to the emergence of a young botanist through the preparation of a master, in partnership with the agriculture institute, support the capacity building of five local NGOs and improve public awareness about plant conservation in Djerba.	\$19 998

WWF Mediterranean-North Africa	Conserver les Plantes Patrimoniales de Garâa Sejenane et Dar Fatma-Tunisie	Tunisia	Strengthen the management of two important sites for plant conservation in Tunisia, through establishment of long-term monitoring system and support to land managers and local users to adopt practices beneficial to local flora. The project, also aims at supporting young professional in botany and conservation sciences, and to establish a network of plant conservationists in Tunisia.	\$183 232
Biodiversity and Environment Research Centre	Engagement of Local Communities in the Conservation of the Threatened Ecosystem and Plant Species in the Nablus Region, Focusing on the Iris of Nablus, Palestine	Palestinian Territory, Occupied	Conduct an assessment of the status of endemic plants, focusing on the Iris lortetii. Identify and map the locations of the species communities, raise awareness of the local communities on plant biodiversity and conservation. Build capacity of community teams to develop and improve their practical plant skills including in situ surveying and protection. Support the incorporation of plant conservation in the management of proposed Protected Area. Increase the numbers of Iris population in their natural locations using the Seed Ball technique	\$19 994
An-Najah National University	Plant Biodiversity Conservation in Ancient Olive Orchards, Palestine	Palestinian Territory, Occupied	Conduct a study to identify the distribution of endemic plant species in North-eastern Slopes region Key Biodiversity Area-KBA. Promote biodiversity friendly agricultural practices to key local stakeholders. Build capacity of local community and stakeholders in plant conservation through training on biodiversity friendly agricultural practices. Promote and increase awareness of in situ conservation to the local communities in the area	\$19 600

Nature Palestine Society	Assessment and conservation of <i>Iris Atrofusca</i> in the North Eastern Slopes Region Key Biodiversity Area, Palestine	Palestinian Territory, Occupied	Assess the distribution of near endemic and threatened plant species, including <i>Iris atrofusca</i> . Support the integration of plant conservation into future management plans and the conservation framework of Key Biodiversity Areas and protected areas in Palestine. Promote and support the engagement of stakeholders and decision makers in conservation planning. Build capacity of local communities to contribute to data collection on flora, focusing on endemic and threatened species.	\$19910
Palestine Wildlife Society	Towards the Sustainability of the National Flower of Palestine ( <i>Iris haynei</i> ) Through an In Situ Scientific Garden	Palestinian Territory, Occupied	Conduct a study to assess the current status and distribution of the national flower of Palestine ( <i>Iris haynei</i> ) in the Faqua'a area and surrounding mountains, and implement in-situ conservation actions for this threatened and endemic <i>Iris</i> . Increase knowledge and skills of the stakeholders to support plant conservation planning, and promote the emergence of a new generation of young professionals in plant conservation. Support innovative measures to conserve important plant communities through collaboration with local communities.	\$19380
Macedonian Biological Society (Македонско биолошко друштво)	Conservation of some Restricted Endemic Plants from Galichica National Park, North Macedonia	North Macedonia	Assessment of the status of endemic and steno-endemic plant species, inhabiting the National Park mountain Galichica and mapping their geographical distribution. Support integration of plant conservation into the future management plan of national park. Conducting seed collection and ex-situ protection of threatened plant species in Botanical Garden in Skopje. Building capacity of students and young experts and raising awareness of local community about plant diversity.	\$29982

Company for Applied Research and Permanent Education in Agriculture	Assessment and Conservation of Endemic and Endangered Plant Species in National Park Pelister	North Macedonia	Improve assessment, protection and conservation of endemic, rare and endangered species of plants in National Park Pelister, Northern Macedonia. Improved management will also be reached through developing an inventory list of targeted plant species, focused in-situ conservation measures, increased capacity of Protected Area managers and rangers and increased awareness of the importance of conservation of rare plants.	\$19 368
Macedonian Ecological Society	Working Together for Conservation of National Endemic Plants in Macedonia	North Macedonia	Assess the current status and distribution of several rare and endangered plants of Jablanica and Dojran Lake regions, and set up a monitoring system. Support Protected Area managers and local organizations to improve plant conservation, and raise awareness on the botanical heritage of the country.	\$81 970
Association Nature Solutions	Préserver les Plantes Menacées dans le Parc National de Talassemtane au Maroc	Morocco	Integrate plant conservation in the management of Talassemtane National Park. Nature Solutions will assess the flora of the area, initiate a monitoring system, and work with inhabitants and park authorities to improve practices (including agriculture, grazing etc.) to preserve the most endangered plants of the area.	\$129 758
NVO Župa u srcu	Plant Diversity within the Wet and Aquatic Habitats of Nikšić Polje Basin (Budoš ponds - Vrtac reservoir, Zeta River, Gračanica River), Montenegro	Montenegro	Explore florist diversity and design a database of plant species in wet and aquatic ecosystems. Analyse threats to plant diversity and identifying potential Natura 2000 habitats. Enrich the herbarium collection of the Natural History Museum of Montenegro and Faculty of Natural Science in Podgorica. Carry out practical training for young researchers, biology students and locals in finding and conserving rare endemic species.	\$26 070

NVO Program za životnu sredinu (NGO Environmental Programme)	Conservation of endemic, rare and threatened plant species on Mount Orjen, Montenegro	Montenegro	Assess the threats and conservation needs of plants in Orjen Mountain Nature Park, and identify management guidelines for the long-term conservation of the most rare, endemic and threatened plant species. The grantee will apply scientific standards to plant research and conservation, increase the capacities of their own organization and park staff, and initiate cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation in order to conserve plant diversity of this site.	\$20 000
NGO Living Green	Lovčenski zvončić – očuvanje razumijevanje i promocija / Lovcen Bell - Preservation, Understanding and Promotion	Montenegro	Protect and raise awareness of the endemic plant Lovćen bell in Montenegro. The project will undertake direct conservation measures to protect the plants from annual fires in the only known site where they occur, and establish long-term conservation measures in cooperation with the Lovćen Mountain National Park administration.	\$19 367
American University of Beirut (AUB)	Leveraging an Integrated Network: Bettering Conservation and Management of Rare Plants in and around Culturally Protected Sites (LINK)	Lebanon	Support the integration of plant conservation into the management of areas protected for their cultural heritage. By guiding vegetation management of such areas, the project aims to ecologically restore habitat patches of the UNESCO World Heritage Center of Byblos, and reverse ecological succession so that habitats conducive for the persistence of rare endemic plants can be encouraged.	\$19 908
The Friends of Nature	Conservation of Lebanon Endemic Flora Through Community Engagement	Lebanon	Develop a participatory planning approach to ensure the conservation of endemic plants in Lebanon. Strengthen the capacities of Protected Area managers and improve management plans for plant conservation in Jabal Moussa and Eden Forest. Support local conservation action, possibly with micro-reserve, for rare plants of Kneisseh summit and Makmel heights	\$154 860

Université Saint-Joseph	Conserving and valorizing the Unique Botanical Heritage of Lebanon	Lebanon	Support various stakeholders to improve conservation of rare, endemic plants of Lebanon. Support three existing reserves (Horsh Eden, Jaj and Jabal Moussa) in integrating plants in their management. Strengthen the micro-reserve of Sarada (established by USJ under a former project). Test circus-situ conservation approach in Archeological sites of Tyre and Anjar.	\$135 035
Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature	Mainstreaming Plant Key Biodiversity Areas into the national Conservation Planning Framework	Jordan	Identify and assess the Key Biodiversity Areas for Plants of the Mediterranean part of Jordan. The sites will then be included in the national land use planning, and conservation needs for plants mainstreamed in national nature protection regulations. The project will also work at strengthening plant conservation measures during the up-date of the management plan of three reserves.	\$165 942
Fauna & Flora International (FFI)	Conserving highly endangered plants on Cabo Verde's "Island of Flowers"	Cabo Verde	Implement activities to increase the capacity, knowledge and skills of local NGO Biflores, and educating community members to support assessment and planning for the conservation of endemic plants on Brava. Establish native plant nurseries for Critically Endangered and Endangered plant species, planting individual trees and increasing the protection of in situ conservation plots where plants can regenerate.	\$19 985
Associação Projecto Vitó	Melhorar o Conhecimento pela Conservação das Espécies da Flora Ameaçadas de Extinção na Ilha do Fogo e Brava	Cabo Verde	Improve the knowledge about flora of Fogo and Brava Island, and build capacity of national park managers and local communities to enhance protection of rare and endangered endemic plants of Cabo Verde.	\$140 000

Udruženje za unapređenje životne sredine	Preservation of endemic plants on Orjen mountain in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Contribute to the formal protection of the biodiversity rich areas of Orjen and Bijela Gora in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project aims at increasing the knowledge on conservation needs of selected endemic plant species and ensure their long-term protection by raising community awareness on their importance. Assessment of the status, presence, distribution, population numbers and area of occupancy will be done for selected endemic plant species.	\$20 000
IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation	Support participation of civil society members in the "II Mediterranean Plant Conservation Week" to enhance plant conservation capacities and skills	Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Cabo Verde; Jordan; Lebanon; Libya; North Macedonia; Morocco; Tunisia	Enabling CEPF grantees from around the region to attend the second Mediterranean Plant Conservation Week, in order to widen the network and liaise with other plant specialists, gain knowledge on approaches and techniques, present their plant projects and seek future collaborations with organizations working on similar themes and species.	\$14 170
Tölgy Természeti védelmi Egyesület (Oak Nature Conservation Association)	Exploring the Habitat Range and Preferences of Rare and Insufficiently Known Local Endemic Plants in Albania	Albania	Assess and determine the habitat range and population size of nine targeted rare and endemic plant species, on mountainous and karstic areas in South and Central Albania: <i>Aubrieta albanica</i> , <i>Carex markgrafii</i> , <i>Crocus novicii</i> , <i>Limonium himarens</i> , <i>Noccaea cikaea</i> , <i>Reichardia albanica</i> , <i>Sesleria albanica</i> , <i>Stachys albanica</i> , <i>Stachys sericophylla</i> . Establish the education of students and nature conservationists about target species and the overall taxonomic and conservational management of rare and/or ghost taxa	\$14 000

ILIRIA-Protection and Social & Environmental Development Association	Site Restricted Endemics of Prespa National Park, Albania – Assessment, Protection and In-situ/Ex-situ Conservation, through the Involvement of Young Professionals	Albania	Establish a regular monitoring system and implementing specific in-situ and ex-situ conservation actions of rare and threatened plant species in Dry Mountain-Galičica mountain ranges. Collect data on distribution, population size and threats of 10-restricted plant species. Assess conservation status and delivering National Red List. Foster a new generation of young professionals in plant conservation through field training and networking of universities and academic institutions.	\$18 270
Qendra për Iniciativa Rajonale	Habitat Enrichment and In-situ Conservation of a Rare Endemic Species of Birthwort, Albania	Albania	Enrich conservation and habitat of critically endangered, unprotected species birthwort, namely <i>Aristolochia merxmulleri</i> , on Munella Mountain, Oroshi Mountain and Lura Lakes. Establish plant population numbers, growth conditions, spatial and temporal dynamics. Engagement of in-situ conservation practices, encouragement of its inclusion to IUCN Red List. Preparation of management plan for future plant conservation. Raise awareness among local community and governmental authorities about importance of plants	\$9 908
Instituti i Politikave Mjedisore (IEP)	Conservation and propagation of the Albanian Tulip	Albania	Ensure the survival of the endemic Albanian Tulip by conserving its habitat and creating a generation of skilled botanists and professionals to continue working on the protection of endemic species in north east Albania. The project aims to increase knowledge and skills through surveys and studies, to support assessment and planning for the conservation of the Albanian Tulip and to strengthen the engagement of stakeholders in supporting species conservation.	\$36 344

Association Tunisienne de Développement Durable: La Recherche en Action (La recherche en Action)	Améliorer des Connaissances sur la flore de l'île de Djerba et de l'état de Conservation de ses Espèces Patrimoniales	Tunisia	Improve knowledge and conservation of the flora in Djerba Island, especially the endemic <i>Limonium formosum</i> . A participatory plan for the creation of a micro-reserve will be conducted for the conservation of <i>L. formosum</i> . The project will also contribute to the emergence of a young botanist through the preparation of a master, in partnership with the agriculture institute, support the capacity building of five local NGOs and improve public awareness about plant conservation in Djerba.	\$19 998
WWF Mediterranean-North Africa	Conserver les Plantes Patrimoniales de Garâa Sejenane et Dar Fatma-Tunisie	Tunisia	Strengthen the management of two important sites for plant conservation in Tunisia, through establishment of long-term monitoring system and support to land managers and local users to adopt practices beneficial to local flora. The project, also aims at supporting young professional in botany and conservation sciences, and to establish a network of plant conservationists in Tunisia.	\$183 232
Biodiversity and Environment Research Centre	Engagement of Local Communities in the Conservation of the Threatened Ecosystem and Plant Species in the Nablus Region, Focusing on the Iris of Nablus, Palestine	Palestinian Territory, Occupied	Conduct an assessment of the status of endemic plants, focusing on the <i>Iris lortetii</i> . Identify and map the locations of the species communities, raise awareness of the local communities on plant biodiversity and conservation. Build capacity of community teams to develop and improve their practical plant skills including in situ surveying and protection. Support the incorporation of plant conservation in the management of proposed Protected Area. Increase the numbers of <i>Iris</i> population in their natural locations using the Seed Ball technique	\$19 994

An-Najah National University	Plant Biodiversity Conservation in Ancient Olive Orchards, Palestine	Palestinian Territory, Occupied	Conduct a study to identify the distribution of endemic plant species in North-eastern Slopes region Key Biodiversity Area-KBA. Promote biodiversity friendly agricultural practices to key local stakeholders. Build capacity of local community and stakeholders in plant conservation through training on biodiversity friendly agricultural practices. Promote and increase awareness of in situ conservation to the local communities in the area	\$19 600
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### Strategic Direction 5: Regional Cooperation

Grantee Name	Project Title	Country	Summary	Grant Amount
Mediterranean Protected Areas Network	Sharing Experience on the Management of Mobile Species within Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean	Albania; Cabo Verde; Libya; Montenegro; Tunisia	Support the capacity building of CEPF beneficiaries through participation in the Mediterranean Marine Protected Area Network workshop on mobile marine species. Discuss the strategies, policies, projects and programmes for these species with other NGOs and stakeholders from different countries in the Mediterranean, with a focus on marine turtles. Learn about targeted conservation measures, monitoring, the management of network-based approaches and stakeholder engagement.	\$10 559

### Strategic Direction 6: Regional Implementation team

Grantee Name	Project Title	Country	Summary	Grant Amount
BirdLife International	Regional Implementation Team for the Mediterranean	All Hotspot	Lead the regional implementation team (RIT) in partnership with BirdLife partners in France (for North African countries) and Slovenia (for the Balkans). Together, this consortium leads the grant solicitation and award process, builds the capacity of grantees, and is responsible for liaison with donors and host country government agencies.	\$1 767 786