

**Response to Working Group Comments on the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Ecosystem Profile**

**Working Group meeting, 8 September 2022**

<b>Working Group Comment</b>	<b>CEPF Secretariat Response</b>
<p>1. Be sure that the contents required by the GCF are included in the profile.</p>	<p>The ecosystem profile has been developed to guide CEPF investment in the hotspot over the next five years. It includes all of the contents required by the CEPF Operational Manual. At the same time, it contains the contents required by the GCF in the financing agreement. In particular, Chapter 14 contains “Eligibility Criteria for the selection of Sub-Projects and Key Biodiversity Areas”, and Chapter 9 contains “opportunities for mainstreaming Ecosystem Based Adaptation into public policies identified in consultation with relevant government agencies in each Host Country”. To further facilitate review of the document by the GCF, the CEPF Secretariat has prepared a comparison of the portfolio logframe in the ecosystem profile with the results framework of the GCF program, which shows how the two are well aligned.</p>
<p>2. Given the regional scope of the investment, how will CEPF ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts?</p>	<p>There are very real constraints to developing a coherent grant portfolio at the level of the hotspot, not least barriers of cost and travel time among the four hotspot countries. Nevertheless, the ecosystem profile incorporates lessons learned from the previous phase and sets out a realistic strategy for ensuring regional integration, where this adds value. First, the RIT that has been recruited for the new phase is a consortium, with a partner in each country and coordination provided by IUCN Netherlands. This provides a local presence that can support applicants and grantees, help to build a coherent portfolio within each country, and identify opportunities for collaboration at the regional level, where this is cost effective and makes sense. Second, Strategic Direction 4 in the investment strategy provides for research activities that measure and verify the impact of the grant portfolio on ecosystem services and test the effectiveness of promising EbA techniques. Some of these research activities will benefit from common methodologies, which will require collaboration among research institutes and universities in the four countries to develop and implement consistently. Third, Strategic Direction 3 in the investment strategy places an explicit emphasis on exchanges and partnerships at national and regional levels, among both CSOs and young conservation professionals. The grant funds available under this strategic direction will be available to support regional initiatives, particularly to exchange lessons learned and replicate good practice with EbA approaches piloted by CEPF grantees.</p>

<p>3. To ensure impact at scale, the investment may benefit from coordination around specific KBAs or corridors.</p>	<p>The investment will focus on priority KBAs, selected based on their importance for ecosystem services that can help local communities adapt to climate change. In the case of Madagascar (excepting a few outlying sites), the priority KBAs form natural clusters: three in the watershed forests of eastern Madagascar; and two in the coastal zone of the southwest. In the case of the other three countries, the priority KBAs are mostly clustered on the larger, inhabited islands, where local beneficiaries and CSOs are also concentrated. This pattern should allow CEPF to coordinate investment in these geographies, promote synergies among grantees, and reduce costs for monitoring and supervision. The RIT may take further advantage of this clustering of sites by, for example, organizing joint project design workshops for applicants from the same cluster (or island) or facilitating exchange visits among grantees at neighboring KBAs.</p>
<p>4. In Madagascar, why were 10 of the highest ranked KBAs taken off the list of priority KBAs?</p>	<p>A specificity of Madagascar is that all protected areas are managed by CSOs or the parastatal entity Madagascar National Parks. As such, where a site has an existing manager or promoter, there is already a strong foundation to build on, in terms of management structures, planning, baseline data and relationships with local communities and other stakeholders. Conversely, for sites with no manager or promoter, it would take several years (at minimum) to establish these fundamentals, before successful EbA activities or other conservation actions could commence. Given the timeframe of the investment phase (five years) and the large number of high priority KBAs that do have existing CSO partners ready to implement work (far more than the available CEPF resources), the profiling team recommended focusing investment on KBAs with the best prospects for impact.</p>
<p>5. Do we wish to link CEPF investments to hydropower projects?</p>	<p>In the Comoros and Mauritius (but not in the other two countries), one of the ecosystem services prioritized by the stakeholders was provision of water for hydropower. In each case, this was one of many ecosystem services taken into account in the multi-criteria analysis that prioritized KBAs for CEPF investment. This service was given a weighting of 5% (the lowest weighting) in each analysis, meaning that it only had a marginal influence on the results. Nevertheless, given the emphasis on promoting integration of EbA approaches into public policy and private sector practices, it was considered helpful to retain hydropower in the analysis, to help make the case that investing in EbA can contribute to climate adaptation priorities in the energy sector.</p>
<p>6. In the threat assessment for Madagascar, more attention could be given to the issue of internal migration.</p>	<p>Internal migration is indeed an important issue in parts of Madagascar. It has been explicitly added as a threat to western dry forest ecosystems in Madagascar (Menabe Region), with a rating of high severity. New text has been added on the issue in Section 7.1.1 of the threats chapter, with a link to a discussion of the factors driving internal migration that was already included in Section 11.7.1.</p>

7. Also in the threat assessment, more attention could be given to the natural disasters as a threat in Mauritius.	Natural disasters are indeed an important issue in Mauritius (and other countries), and "Storms, droughts and other natural disasters" has been added to the threat assessment for Mauritius with the highest ratings for severity.
8. The EU delegations in Madagascar and Mauritius should be involved when the CEPF Secretariat is organizing missions or events.	This advice is well heeded. The CEPF Secretariat will visit the EU delegations during all future supervision missions to these two countries, and will invite representatives to participate in events and site visits to see work on the ground. Representatives from the delegations will also be invited by the RIT to participate in the review of applications, to look for synergies with EU-supported actions and avoid duplication of effort.
9. Is there a plan to work with the GEF Small Grants Program on the Indian Ocean islands? Sharing application formats or reporting templates could reduce the burden for small CSOs.	The RIT plans to invite the SGP national coordinators to participate in the review of applications, and to explore with them other opportunities for collaboration, including coordinating calls for proposals, to reduce workload for CSOs. There may be opportunities to use CEPF grants to scale up pilot activities on EbA supported by the SGP, or to pool resources for capacity building of local CSOs.
10. Be realistic about the challenges to influence government.	This advice is well taken.