

Recent Hotspot Highlights

East Melanesian Islands

In Vanuatu, the Department of Environmental Protection, together with CEPF grantee Live and Learn Vanuatu and the community of Kerepua, officially announced the Mount Tabwemasana Area as a legally recognized conservation area. The area is the biggest registered conservation area in Vanuatu (4,959 hectares). There are now six registered conservation areas in the country.

During fiscal year 2018, nine large grants and six small grants, totaling US\$949,039, were awarded in the hotspot.



Guinean Forests of West Africa

The regional implementation team (RIT) continued to review the high number of applications received during the open call for proposals and initiated the grant-making process for shortlisted projects. The RIT also conducted field monitoring visits to Guinea, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, visiting three small grantees and one large grantee.

During fiscal year 2018, 10 large grants and one small grant, totaling US\$2,548,543, were awarded in the hotspot.

Mediterranean Basin

During the first call for proposals for CEPF's second investment phase in the hotspot, 12 letters of inquiry were received for projects in Libya. However, none was determined to be strong enough to move forward. In response, regional implementation team (RIT) members Awatef Abiadh and Sharif Jbour traveled to the country to help civil society organizations in project identification and preparation.

They held a workshop in Tripoli, which gathered 18 people representing 12 Libyan organizations. During the workshop, project ideas were discussed and training on project preparation (e.g., logical frameworks, budgets, etc.) was provided.



Participants demonstrated great commitment and enthusiasm, and several are currently working on proposals for the current open call. CEPF and the RIT have decided to focus work in Libya on small grants, which allow applicants to submit proposals in Arabic.

BirdLife International published an interview with Awatef and Jbour, which can be found [here](#).

Recent Hotspot Highlights

Indo-Burma

By supporting women's networks' involvement in biodiversity conservation, CEPF grantee Mekong Community Institute Association (MCI) in Thailand has improved the management of natural resources in the Ing River—a tributary of the Mekong River in northern Thailand.

In Phayao Province, MCI worked with an existing women's network, providing training and opportunities to contribute to practical conservation action. Members of the women's network carried out participatory action research in Mae Rongkhui Village that resulted in information about edible and medicinal plants—resources traditionally harvested by women—becoming incorporated into the management plan for the village's 240-hectare community forest. The plan had previously focused on the traditionally male-dominated activity of timber extraction. Watch a [short video](#) (Thai) about the role of women in Mae Rongkhui Community Forest.

In neighboring Chiang Rai Province, MCI facilitated the establishment of Boonrueng Women's Group, which supports and promotes conservation and restoration actions by women in Boonrueng Village and is intended to inspire other communities in the province. By selling handicrafts and T-shirts, and by organizing a tree-ordination by local Buddhist monks, the women's group raised funds to conserve a 236-hectare community wetland forest. Watch a [short video clip](#) (Thai) of their activities.

At the river basin level, MCI supported the establishment of the Ing Women's Network for Environmental Conservation (IWNEC). This network, which counts both Phayao Women's Network and Boonrueng Women's Group among its founder members, is intended to become a platform for cooperation among women and their organizations who are involved in conservation in the Ing River Basin. MCI ensured that the IWNEC was connected to the Peoples Council of Ing River Basin, the overall coordinating body for civil society-led conservation efforts for the basin.



IWNEC organized a seminar on women and environmental conservation, as part of the Ing Forum. About 300 people attended, including the vice governor of Phayao Province, the European Union ambassador to Thailand, villagers, academics, students and monks. Recommendations from the seminar were submitted to the vice governor. A short documentary film about women and environmental conservation in the Ing River Basin [was produced](#) (Thai).

During fiscal year 2018, 12 large grants and 17 small grants, totaling US\$1,177,012, were awarded in the hotspot.

Recent Hotspot Highlights

Caribbean Islands

The ecosystem profile team led by CANARI convened a regional consultation in Kingston, Jamaica, in January. More than 30 people from 11 countries met to review the key findings that emerged from the profiling process and provide their input on the proposed CEPF investment strategy and Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) prioritization process.

Participants also responded to a request for data to help refine the KBA selection and delineation. After the meeting, the CANARI team focused on finalizing the KBA definition and prioritization process.

Tropical Andes

In February, Grant Director Michele Zador and members of the regional implementation team visited Aguila de Oro Gold Mining Cooperative in Apolobamba Integrated Management Natural Area in Bolivia under the grant, "Capacity Building to Reduce the Impact of Mining in the Polylepis Forests of Apolobamba, Madidi, and Pilon Lajas Protected Areas of Bolivia" implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).



The Bolivian government authorized mining activities in protected areas, including national parks. More than 140 gold mining cooperatives are now scattered across the 483,743 hectares of Apolobamba. Large extensions of land removal and toxic waste products from mining are contrasted against the otherwise breath-taking landscape of the high Altiplano plateau.

WCS signed a memorandum of understanding with Aguila de Oro Gold Mining Cooperative in the first quarter of 2018 to pilot a demonstration project to incorporate environmental and social best practices in mining. This memorandum was the result of WCS training and outreach to this cooperative and others over the year. The Aguila de Oro cooperative aims to receive special green certification through the process, which will allow cooperative members to capture a higher price for their gold on the international market.

According to one member of the mining cooperative, "We live within a national park and our aim is to care for the environment, but we need a technical assistance to improve our production and improve our quality of life."

During fiscal year 2018, 10 large grants totaling US\$1,038,365 were awarded in the hotspot.

Wallacea

Though the islands in Indonesia's Maluku province are relatively small, they hold multiple stakeholders with various interests: communities with diverse ethnicities; government agencies with different mandates; businesses operating on timeframes that are at odds with those of conservation groups.

Recent Hotspot Highlights

Within this context, CEPF is making various small grants to tackle individual land and marine management issues. However, CEPF has also made one overarching grant to a group called Yayasan Tana Air Beta (TAB), based in Bali. TAB's challenge is to understand the motivations of the multiple stakeholders and, ultimately, propose a rubric for coordination that places conservation within a sustainable economic development framework.



TAB's work, which began in late 2017, has started with an enumeration of household income sources and expenditures in Seram, Sawai, Masihulan, and North and South Boano. The results show that daily living costs and children's education make up 65 to 75 percent of expenses for most households. Certainly, in that context, choices—to set aside fishing grounds or to preserve a forest instead of cultivating the land—can be stark. To help make such choices, TAB is building an electronic model that shows short- and long-term outcomes at a household level.

During fiscal year 2018, four large grants and one small grant, totaling US\$1,146,804, were awarded in the hotspot.

Eastern Afromontane

Beginning in January 2018, five grants with a common approach got underway: the use of conservation agreements where stakeholder groups receive something of value from the implementing CEPF grantee in exchange for a conservation action.

In Kenya, Nature Kenya, Wetlands International and Kijabe Environment Volunteers are each working with water-user associations and forest-user associations to promote better management of Key Biodiversity Areas in the Mount Kenya and Kikuyu Escarpment regions. The grantees are providing communities with inputs to alternative livelihoods and facilitating the process with relevant government agencies for the user associations to gain greater control of their land, while the communities then engage in watershed protection measures.

Meanwhile, in Uganda, the Chimpanzee Trust will facilitate direct cash payments to farmers that maintain or restore riparian corridors connecting parts of the Bugoma protected forest, and in Rwanda, the Forest of Hope Association will provide legal small-scale mining operations with water pumps in exchange for employing impoverished individuals who would otherwise illegally mine within Gishwati National Park.



The key element, in each case, is the *quid pro quo*. Communities engage in a behavior that is positive for the environment—better forest and slope management, pulling cultivation back from the edge of the stream, hiring a person with few alternatives. In exchange, they receive a benefit such as equipment to improve their business or farm. This arrangement is formalized through a conservation agreement.

Recent Hotspot Highlights

Having five grantees employ a common goal further allows us to mentor them and replicate best practices.

During fiscal year 2018, 11 large grants and three small grants, totaling US\$1,587,097, were awarded in the hotspot.

Cerrado

In April, a field supervision mission took place with the CI-GEF Project Agency—represented by Free de Koning—along with members of the Cerrado Regional Implementation Team (RIT), CEPF Managing Director Jack Tordoff and CEPF Grant Director Peggy Poncelet. The group met with four grantees to discuss their progress. The mission concluded that all grantees, including the RIT, are appropriate organizations to receive funding.

During fiscal year 2018, 14 large grants and 10 small grants, totaling US\$2,173,799, were awarded in the hotspot.



Photos (top to bottom): DEPC Director Reedly Tari officially handing over registration certificate to the TCCA chairman at Kerepua Village. © Rolenas Tavue Baereleo/Ecolifelihood Development Association; Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) nest at Farwa. © CEPF Med; Members of IWNEC on a field trip to learn about Mekong ecosystems. © Mekong Community Institute Association; Mining in Bolivia. © CI/photo by Michele Zador; Ora Beach, Maluku. © Matiinu Iman Ramadhan/Flickr Creative Commons; Endangered golden monkey (*Cercopithecus kandti*) in Gishwati Forest, Rwanda. © Fabian Haas; Frilled coquette (*Lophornis magnificus*) in Brazil. © CI/photo by Jack Tordoff