

The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Ecosystem Profile Summary





Cover photos left to right:
Village in the Atlas Mountains, Morocco. © Inanc Tekguc, for Global Diversity Foundation
Iris sofarana, endemic to Mount Lebanon. © Université Saint-Joseph/ Image by Thierry Magniez

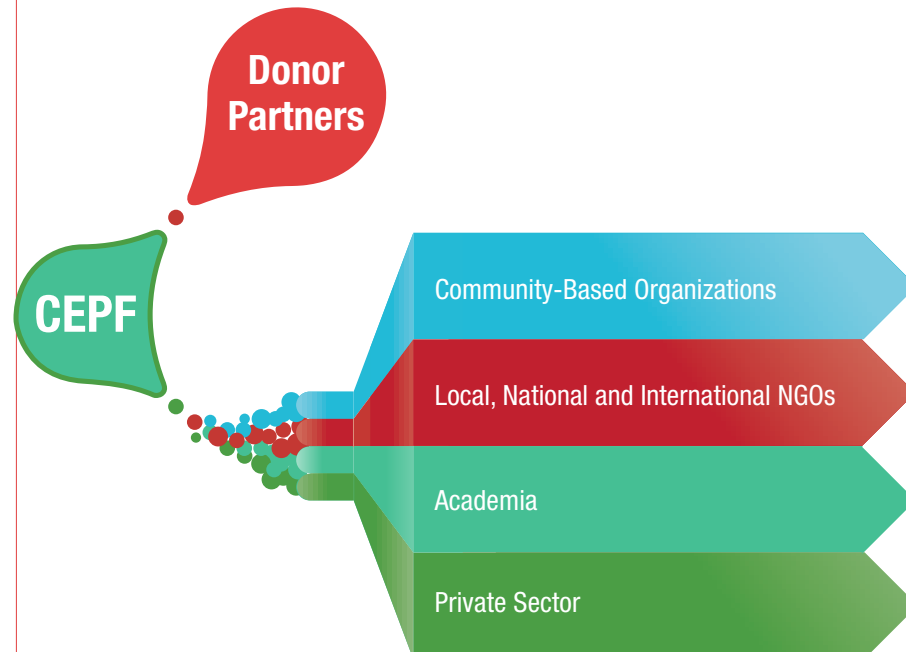
^ Kristijan Sundic, park ranger, scouts the marshes of Panceva Oka. Behind him, Nikola Ulcjevic works both as a fisherman and as a boat driver for the National Park patrols. Skadar Lake, Montenegro © Jamie Rojo

About CEPF

Established in 2000, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank.

CEPF brings together global institutional donors and nongovernmental organizations working in the world's biodiversity hotspots to protect the biological diversity humanity depends on. Together, we strengthen local conservation leadership and implement strategies to safeguard some of the most important ecosystems for the future of life on Earth.

How CEPF Works



The Hotspot

The Mediterranean Basin is one of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots, some of Earth's most biologically rich, yet threatened, areas. The hotspot covers more than 2 million square kilometres and stretches west to east from Portugal to Jordan and north to south from Italy to Cabo Verde. It is the third richest hotspot in the world in terms of plant diversity, with approximately 25,000 species, more than half of which are found nowhere else. Rivalling the hotspot's natural diversity is its cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity.

More than 5,000 years of recorded history shows the hotspot found equilibrium between ecosystems and human activity in the past. But now the pressure for economic development presents an extreme threat to nature and communities that rely on it for fresh water, food and a variety of other ecosystem services.

In recent years, the hotspot has experienced unprecedented levels of political change. With that said, many governments across the region are becoming more open to collaboration with civil society, and new opportunities are emerging for nongovernmental organizations to engage in work on the ground and influence planning and policy making.

In 2012, CEPF launched a US\$10.7 million, five-year program of investment in the hotspot, including a contribution of US\$1.13 million from regional CEPF donor the MAVA Foundation. This initial investment demonstrated that civil society organizations capable of and committed to conservation do exist in each hotspot country, and that adequate financial and technical support has the potential to build strong constituencies able to tackle conservation issues at the local, national and regional levels.

In 2017, CEPF launched a second five-year investment of US\$10 million. This second phase focuses on protecting plants, promoting regional networking and preserving three ecosystems—coastal, freshwater and traditionally managed landscapes.



©CI 2019
Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Biological Importance

of the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

The collision of the African and Eurasian tectonic plates millions of years ago created huge variability in the basin's topography, climate and geography, giving rise to an astounding array of species and habitats.



The hotspot has roughly the same plant diversity as all of tropical Africa, in a surface area one-fourth the size of sub-Saharan Africa.

During CEPF's first investment in the hotspot, a new snail, *Bythinella melovskii*, was discovered in Macedonia by grantees.



Exceptional numbers of reptiles, almost

40%
of which are endemic.

Water is the single most important ecosystem service in this highly water-stressed region.

NEARLY 300
MAMMAL
SPECIES,

including the Endangered Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) and the region's only primate species, the Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*).



MORE THAN
500 BIRD SPECIES,
INCLUDING
63
ENDEMIC.

In addition, millions of migratory birds cross the hotspot through several flyways.

Eurasian coot (*Fulica atra*)
Podhum, Skadar Lake Montenegro. © Jaime Rojo

The Mediterranean Basin is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world to climate change, and this will impact the capacity of the hotspot's ecosystems to provide goods and services to human society.



Monastir, Tunisia, a popular tourist destination. © Louis-Marie Preau

Threats

In addition to the 135 million people who live in the Mediterranean, 220 million tourists—32 percent of all worldwide international travelers—visit each year. It is, therefore, no surprise that economic development and human activity are putting tremendous strain on the hotspot's remaining natural habitats.

Lack of effective planning—and management systems to control these pressures—compound the problem, leading to massive increases in natural resource exploitation, pollution of freshwater bodies and the marine environment, and conversion of natural habitats for other purposes.

In addition, the Mediterranean Basin is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world to climate change, and this will increasingly impact the capacity of its ecosystems to provide goods and services to local people.



Hatchling loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*).
© Conservation International/photo by Pierre Carret

First-Phase Investment

During the initial five-year investment in the Mediterranean Basin, CEPF and its regional implementation team, led by BirdLife International, awarded 108 grants to 93 organizations for a total investment of US\$10.7 million.

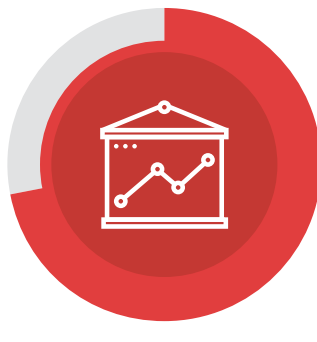
Key Results



81%
of CEPF grantees in the hotspot were local or national organizations.



15
POLICIES INFLUENCED BY PROJECTS IN **7** COUNTRIES.



72%
of CEPF grantee organizations reported increased capacity (measured by the Civil Society Tracking Tool).

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8
NEW PROTECTED AREAS COVERING **27,651** hectares established with the help of CEPF grantees.

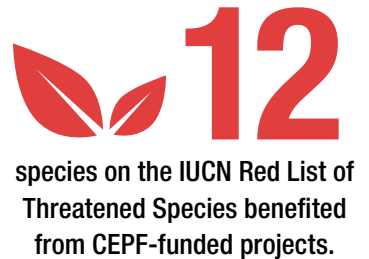


65
Key Biodiversity Areas benefited from CEPF grantee actions.

51 KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS COVERING **2,177,809** hectares had management strengthened by CEPF grantees.



1,485,000
hectares of productive landscapes with improved management.



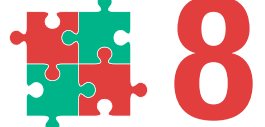
12
species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species benefited from CEPF-funded projects.



130+
communities in the hotspot benefited from CEPF-funded projects.



12,000
people increased their revenue through projects that developed sustainable livelihood activities.



8
networks involving civil society organizations were created.

The MAVA Foundation provided additional support to the investment.

Five CEPF Grantee Successes

1. Established three **plants micro-reserves**, helping to protect species found only in Lebanon, including the Endangered *Iris sofarana*. Trained local scientists and IUCN Red List of Threatened Species evaluators to help address the lack of plant identification knowledge in the country.



Iris sofarana keserwana. © Magda Bou Dagher

GRANTEE: University of Saint-Joseph

2. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, **used environmental DNA sampling** to find the olm (*Proteus anguinus*), a cave-dwelling salamander listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. This marked the first time the technique was used to successfully detect a subterranean organism and the first evidence showing the olm was present in Montenegro.



Olm. © Gregor Aljancić

GRANTEE: Society for Cave Biology

3. Built **buoyant nesting rafts** for Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) colony on Skadar Lake on the border of Albania and Montenegro, and installed video surveillance to monitor the birds. As a result of these efforts and those by other organizations, active nesting pairs went from fewer than a dozen in the recent past to 48 in 2017.



Dalmatian pelicans, Skadar Lake. © Jaime Rojo

GRANTEE: Noé Conservation

4. During pilot project in Morocco, worked with two Amazigh (Berber) indigenous communities where local plants are threatened from overharvesting and livestock overgrazing. Created **community nurseries** for endemic and income-generating species, organized community cooperatives to strengthen product prices, and built new water basins for better irrigation.



Adel Merzoug, a community researcher, interviews a local elder. © Inanc Tekguc, for Global Diversity Foundation

GRANTEE: Global Diversity Foundation

5. On Cabo Verde's Raso Islet, worked to bolster population of Critically Endangered Raso lark (*Alauda razae*). CEPF-funded project helped lay the groundwork for the subsequent **successful re-introduction** of the species to a second island, Santa Luzia.



Raso lark. © Awater Abiadh

GRANTEE: Biosfera, SPEA (BirdLife Portugal)



Developing the Ecosystem Profile

Before providing funding to a hotspot, CEPF develops an “ecosystem profile,” an assessment of the hotspot and strategy for CEPF’s investment. This work identifies threats, the current economic situation and conservation priorities.

The first ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean Basin was created in 2010 and set the strategy for the initial phase of CEPF investment (2012–2017). In 2017, more than 500 governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders were consulted to update the profile, which includes new data, incorporates the new Key Biodiversity Area Standard criteria, and sets the CEPF investment strategy for 2017 to 2022. To read the complete ecosystem profile, visit cepf.net/MedBasin/profile.

Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*),
Stanaj, Skadar Lake, Montenegro. © Jamie Rojo

CEPF Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities

1

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the preservation of biodiversity in coastal areas.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Engage local stakeholders in conservation actions that address threats to key elements of biodiversity in priority Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) in the coastal zone.
- Engage private sector stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices that deliver positive impacts for conservation in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.
- 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

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services.
- Take action to reduce threats and improve management of selected sites in priority freshwater catchments with the participation of local stakeholders.
- Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority catchment management zones (CMZs).

3

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Promote the maintenance of traditional land-use practices necessary for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of high cultural and biodiversity value.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Support local communities to increase the benefit they receive from maintaining and enhancing traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use and agricultural practices.
- 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.
- Encourage business actors in the trade chain to support and promote traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.

4

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the conservation of plants that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges.*

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- 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.
- Support integration of plant conservation into the management of protected areas.
- Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with land owners and managers.

5

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Strengthen the regional conservation community through the sharing of best practices and knowledge among grantees across the hotspot.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Support regional and thematically-focused learning processes for CSOs and stakeholders.
- Support grantees to understand and engage with international conventions and processes.

6

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a regional implementation team.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Build a constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile.
- Act as a liaison unit for relevant networks throughout the Mediterranean to harmonize investments and direct new funding to priority issues and sites.

***For Strategic Direction 4 on plant conservation, eligible sites should fulfill at least one of the following criteria:**

- Sites with plant species in threat categories Critically Endangered (CR) in the IUCN Global Red List.
- Sites with plant species that have not yet been assessed in the Global Red List, but that would qualify for CR according to the IUCN global Red List criteria and thresholds.
- Sites hosting “Site restricted endemics (SRE),” which include:
 - Taxa occurring in only one site (and nowhere else in the world)
 - Extent of occurrence less than 100 km²
 - Area of occupancy less than 10 km²

Coastal Key Biodiversity Areas Prioritized for CEPF Support Under Strategic Direction 1

Country	KBA code	KBA name
Albania	ALB04	Gjiri i Sarandës - Parku Kombëtar Butrint
Albania	ALB05	Gjiri i Vlorës - Gadishulli i Karaburunit - Ishulli i Sazanit - Mali i Çikës
Albania	ALB10	Liqeni i Shkodrës – Lumi i Bunës-Velipojë - Vau i Dejës
Algeria	DZA14	Chaîne du Dahra
Algeria	DZA22	El Kala - Tarf
Algeria	DZA39	Parc national de Taza
Algeria	DZA43	Presqu'île de l'Edough
Cabo Verde	CPV04	Boavista praias
Cabo Verde	CPV05	Costa de Fragata
Cabo Verde	CPV10	Ilha de Santa Luzia
Cabo Verde	CPV14	Ilhéu Raso
Egypt	EGY06	Omayed Biosphere Reserve
Egypt	EGY07	Ras El Hekma Coastal Dunes
Egypt	EGY09	Sallum Gulf
Egypt	EGY10	Western Mediterranean Coastal Dunes
Libya	LBY06	Farwa
Libya	LBY11	Karabolli
Montenegro	MNE03	Bojana Delta
Montenegro	MNE05	Katici, Donkova and Velja Seka
Morocco	MAR46	Parc National de Souss-Massa et Aglou
Tunisia	TUN03	Archipel de Zembra
Tunisia	TUN27	Golfe de Boughrara
Tunisia	TUN31	Îles Kuriat
Tunisia	TUN33	Jbel Nadhour et Lagune de Ghar El Melh
Tunisia	TUN60	Sebkhet Sejourmi



CEPF investment is not possible in Turkey; the country's endorsement of the ecosystem profile is pending.

Catchment Management Zones Prioritized for CEPF Support Under Strategic Direction 2

Country	Catchment Management Zone
Albania	Lake Butrint catchment
Albania, FYR Macedonia, Greece*	Prespa Lake catchment
Albania, FYR Macedonia	Lake Ohrid catchment
Albania, Montenegro	Lake Skadar catchment
Albania, Montenegro	Lower Bojana river basin
Algeria	Eastern Numidia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Trebizat drainage including Imotsko polje
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Popovo polje and Trebišnjica
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia*	Neretva delta and associated springs/ lakes including Hutovo Blato
FYR Macedonia, Greece*	Doirani Lake catchment
Montenegro	Catchment surrounding Niksic
Morocco	Abid river
Morocco	Arhreme river
Morocco	Middle Oum Er Rbia - Beni Mellal
Morocco	Oued Bouregreg
Morocco	Sehb El Majnoune
Morocco	Tifnout basin
Morocco	Upper Oum Er Rbia
Tunisia	Cap Serrat - Cap Blanc - Parc national de l'Ichkeul
Tunisia	Maden River

* Country not eligible for CEPF support.



CEPF investment is not possible in Turkey; the country's endorsement of the ecosystem profile is pending.

Corridors Prioritized for CEPF Support under Strategic Direction 3

Corridor	Countries	Corridor area (km²)	No. of KBAs
Orontes Valley and Levantine Mountains	Turkey*, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine*	38,433	65
The Atlas Mountains	Morocco	106,691	44
The Dorsal and Telian Atlas	Tunisia, Algeria	82,633	50

Note: * Country not eligible for CEPF support.





Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*). © Jaime Rojo/The Living Med

CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank.

www.cepf.net

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