

# Western Ghats & Sri Lanka Hotspot

## Western Ghats Region

### CEPF INVESTMENT PLANNED

\$4.5 million

### QUICK FACTS

The Western Ghats region performs important hydrological and watershed functions, sustaining the livelihoods of the approximately 245 million people who live in the Indian states that receive most of their water supply from rivers originating in the region.

Analyses reveal the presence of 332 globally threatened species and thousands of unique species in the Western Ghats.

The forests of the Western Ghats are some of the best representatives of non-equatorial evergreen forests in the world.

Experts estimate that between 1920 and 1990, 40 percent of the region's natural vegetation was converted to coffee and tea plantations.

The Western Ghats of southwestern India and the highlands of southwestern Sri Lanka, separated by 400 kilometers, are strikingly similar in their geology, climate and evolutionary history. Together, they form one of the most densely populated of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots.

The Western Ghats and Sri Lanka Hotspot is extraordinarily rich in species, especially plants, found nowhere else. However, its forests face tremendous population pressure and have been dramatically impacted by demands for timber and agricultural land.

CEPF investments focus on the Western Ghats region, which stretches across an area of 180,000 square kilometers along the west coast of India. The Western Ghats comprises less than 6 percent of the total land area of India, yet contains more than 30 percent of all plant, fish, amphibian, reptile, bird and mammal species found there.

### THREATS

While once an area of dense forest, today only one-third of the Western Ghats' natural vegetation remains in pristine condition. Further, many existing forests are highly fragmented and facing increasing degradation. The significant deforestation and, consequently, habitat loss can mostly be attributed to a burgeoning human population and its demand for agricultural land, infrastructure development and economic growth.

Moreover, poor coordination among the various government agencies



CEPF investments in the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka Hotspot (right) focus on the Western Ghats region, which extends along the west coast of India.

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managing the region's natural resources coupled with a lack of engagement of civil society in biodiversity management and conservation efforts has led to numerous conflicts and limited effectiveness.

### CEPF INVESTMENT STRATEGY

CEPF provides grants enabling nongovernmental organizations and private sector entities to protect vital ecosystems.

CEPF formally launched its investment in this region in December 2008 following the selection of Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment as the CEPF Regional Implementation Team.

The strategy is based on analyses with stakeholders indicating that new partnerships must be created for effective conservation efforts, and civil society organizations independently and in partnership with government must play an important role in conservation and building awareness. In addition, current scientific knowledge about the status and distribution of species and biodiversity-rich areas in the region is inadequate.

Conservation of five large landscapes—the Anamalai, Malnad-Kodagu, Mysore-Nilgiri, Periyar-Agasthyamalai, and Sahyadri-Konkan biodiversity conservation corridors—and 80 key biodiversity areas is emphasized.

Priorities for investment include the globally threatened wildlife, which include 229 plant species, 31 mammal species, 15 bird species, 52 amphibian species, four reptile species and one fish species.

#### *Strategic Funding Directions*

CEPF investments in this region are guided by two strategic directions and related investment priorities, a full description of which can be found on [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net). Each project must be linked to a strategic direction to be approved for funding:

1. Enable action by diverse communities and partnerships to ensure conservation of key biodiversity areas and enhance connectivity in the corridors
2. Improve the conservation of globally threatened species through systematic conservation planning and action

A third strategic direction is designed for the Regional Implementation Team to provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment.



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Key biodiversity areas can be linked to create corridors enabling movement of species, such as elephants and tigers.

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#### ABOUT US

CEPF is a joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International (CI), the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. As one of the founding partners, CI administers the global program.

CEPF provides grants to nongovernmental organizations and other private sector partners to help safeguard biodiversity hotspots—the biologically richest and most threatened regions on Earth. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in conserving the hotspots.

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment acts as the CEPF Regional Implementation Team for the Western Ghats.

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#### LEARN MORE

For more information about CEPF, the strategy for this region and how to apply for grants, visit [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net) or [www.atree.org](http://www.atree.org) or e-mail [cepfwghats@atree.org](mailto:cepfwghats@atree.org).