

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

No-Objection Approval Pursuant to Section 2.03(c) of the Financing Agreement
28 July 2010

Ecosystem Profile for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

Recommended Action Item:

The Donor Council is asked to **approve on a no-objection basis** the ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspot. Similarly, the Donor Council is asked to provide for the increase to the CEPF spending authority from \$154.9 million to \$164.9 million for implementation of this profile.

The deadline for the no-objection approval is 10 September 2010.

Background:

The Donor Council approved five new biodiversity hotspots as priorities for CEPF investment in July 2007 based on the paper “Setting Priorities for Future Investment”¹ as follows:

- Mediterranean Basin;
- Caribbean Islands;
- East Melanesian Islands;
- Eastern Afromontane (incorporating the Horn of Africa as appropriate); and
- Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany.

Two other new priorities for investment are expected to be selected at a later date from among the following hotspots: Madrean Pine-Oak Woodlands; Cerrado; Wallacea; Chilean Winter Rainfall-Valdivian Forests; and Mountains of Central Asia.

The Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspot covers more than 2 million square kilometers and stretches west to east from Portugal to Jordan and north to south from northern Italy to Cape Verde.

The ecosystem profile for this hotspot was developed under the leadership of Doğa Derneği, the BirdLife partner in Turkey. Twelve organizations worked collectively in developing the profile for this exceptionally large and complex region. In addition to Doğa Derneği, key organizations within the profiling team included Conservation International, BirdLife International and its partners in the region, Tour du Valat, IUCN and Plantlife International.

A working draft of the profile was distributed to Working Group members and all others invited to participate in a stakeholder meeting held in March 2010 as part of the profiling process. This refined draft, incorporating all stakeholder reviews to date, was distributed for review and discussion during the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Working Group in preparation for submission to the Donor Council for review and approval.

Regional coordinators supported the CEPF profiling process and coordinated the data flow between individual countries and the profiling team. An organization was assigned for each

¹ Setting Priorities for Future Investment paper,
www.cepf.net/Documents/11_10.settingprioritiesforfutureinvestment.pdf (PDF - 246 KB)

of the four sub-regions: North Africa, Northern Mediterranean, Macaronesia and the Middle East. Association “Les Amis des Oiseaux” (BirdLife partner in Tunisia), Sociedad Española de Ornitología, Sociedade Portuguesa Para O Estudo Das Aves (BirdLife partner in Portugal) and the BirdLife International Middle East Division, respectively, worked as regional coordinators of these four sub-regions.

Two stakeholder consultation workshops were organized to enhance the information flow between project partners and national stakeholders. In Istanbul, Turkey, a stakeholder workshop was organized for key stakeholders in the Northern Mediterranean, Macaronesia and the Middle East, while stakeholders from North Africa met in Kénitra, Morocco. Both meetings were organized in the first week of December 2009 and each lasted two days. A wider consultation process was also carried out with many other stakeholders through bilateral communications, before and after the stakeholder consultation workshops.

Following this process, a final regional stakeholder workshop was held in France in March 2010, enabling key experts and stakeholders to review a refined draft and provide further comments as needed.

A refined draft of the profile was discussed at a meeting of the Working Group in June 2010. All comments have been incorporated into this final draft submitted for Donor Council review and approval.

The ecosystem profile presents an overview of the hotspot in terms of its biological importance, climate change impacts, major threats to and root causes of biodiversity loss, socioeconomic context and current conservation investments. It provides a suite of measurable conservation outcomes, identifies funding gaps and opportunities for investment, and thus identifies the niche where CEPF investment can provide the greatest incremental value. It also contains a five-year, \$10 million investment strategy for CEPF in the region.

The CEPF niche for investment in the Mediterranean has been formulated through an inclusive, participatory process that engaged civil society, donor and government stakeholders throughout the region. Based on the refinement of the full set of outcomes identified, CEPF investments will focus on six biodiversity conservation corridors with 50 of the highest-priority key biodiversity areas. The remaining 218 key biodiversity areas in these six priority corridors will benefit from landscape-level interventions as they are critical for maintaining the integrity of ecosystem processes and services. In addition a further 20 key biodiversity areas represent highly irreplaceable and vulnerable sites in five other corridors will be the focus of site-level investments. A number of these sites also contain some of the last remaining pristine coastline in the Mediterranean Basin. In total, 15 countries will benefit from the investment.

CEPF’s niche will be to work with all actors engaged in conservation and development activities in Mediterranean Basin countries to foster partnerships in priority corridors and sites. Such partnerships will seek to reduce impacts of these developments on natural resources and systems that the large communities are dependent on. In addition, opportunities to increase the benefits and reduce upland shifts in land use by the communities within these landscapes will be explored. These approaches will be based upon applying the experiences of unsustainable development in other parts of the Mediterranean Basin, as well as introducing new approaches. The ecological footprint in the northern part of the Mediterranean is significantly higher than in the South and therefore investment in the South presents an important opportunity to ensure areas with high biodiversity and high levels of threat but not yet as high of an ecological footprint can be effectively protected.

Currently, few funding organizations support civil society to play a vital role in the conservation of priority key biodiversity areas and the water basins where these areas are located. Most key biodiversity areas are inhabited by large numbers of people that closely rely on water and other natural resources in these areas. Therefore, civil society in the hotspot, in its own right, is crucially positioned to conserve and sustain biodiversity. Furthermore, civil society organizations can effectively stimulate partnership between the governments and the corporate sector toward conservation of biodiversity.