CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

Ecosystem Profile

Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

Extended Technical Summary

July 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a collaborative funding initiative of the l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Conservation International (CI), the European Union (EU), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. Their shared objective is the conservation of biodiversity hotspots, the 36 most important and threatened regions for the conservation of terrestrial biodiversity globally (Myers *et al.*2000). Hotspots are defined as regions with least 1,500 plant species found nowhere else, and which have lost more than 70 percent of their original habitat extent (Mittermeier *et al.*2004).

CEPF funding is available to countries thst have signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, are eligible to receive funds from the Global Environment Facility, and are client members of the World Bank group. The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot is unusual in that more than half of the countries it covers are members of the EU or otherwise developed economies which are not eligible for support from CEPF. The 14 countries that are eligible for CEPF support are in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans. Kosovo and Palestine[1] (West Bank and Gaza) are also in the hotspot but do not meet the criteria for support from CEPF. They are included in the situational analysis chapters of the ecosystem profile, which describe an overall agenda for conservation that can be used by other funders to guide their investments in conservation actions led by civil society groups. They are excluded, however, from the definition of CEPF's funding niche and the prioritization of sites for CEPF support.

1.2 The Mediterranean Biodiversity Hotspot

The Mediterranean Hotspot is the second largest hotspot in the world, 2,085,292 km^2, and the largest of the world's five Mediterranean-climate regions. It stretches from Cabo Verde in the west to Jordan and Turkey in the east, and from Italy in the north to Tunisia in the south. It also includes parts of Spain, France, the Balkan States, Greece, Turkey, and the nations of North Africa and the Middle East, as well as around 5,000 islands scattered around the Mediterranean Sea. West of the mainland, the hotspot includes a number of Atlantic islands: the Canaries, Madeira, the Selvages (Selvagens), the Azores and Cabo Verde (Figure 1.1).

1.3 Updating the ecosystem profile

In 2012, CEPF launched a five-year program of investment in the hotspot, which resulted in the award of 108 grants to 84 different organizations in 12 countries, with a total value of US$11 million. The CEPF donor council has approved the updating of the ecosystem profile as a basis for a further five-year program of support, from 2017 to 2022. The updating process has taken account of the dramatic political changes in the region since the original ecosystem profile was prepared in 2010, and the large amounts of new information that is now available on the hotspot's biodiversity, in part as a result of work funded by CEPF during the first phase.

[1] This designation is without prejudice to the individual positions of the CEPF donors on the issue of the status of Palestinian territories.

The core of the ecosystem profile is the definition of "conservation outcomes" for 16 countries. These outcomes refer to the entire set of conservation targets in a hotspot to be achieved in order to prevent biodiversity loss. To this end, they are defined at three scales, representing: (i) the globally threatened species within the region; (ii) the sites that sustain them (i.e. Key Biodiversity Areas or KBAs); and (iii) the corridors necessary to maintain the ecological and evolutionary processes upon which those sites depend. The CEPF funding niche and strategy is based on these outcomes, and defines the priorities for funding by CEPF over the next five years, in the 14 eligible countries of the hotspot.

Figure 1.1: The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

2. BACKGROUND

The ecosystem profile update was led by a consortium consisting of BirdLife International, IUCN, Tour du Valat, Conservatoire du Littoral, and three BirdLife Partners from Mediterranean-based organizations: Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO/BirdLife Spain), Društvo za opazovanje in proučevanje ptic slovenije (DOPPS/BirdLife, Slovenia) and Association Les Amis des Oiseaux (AAO/BirdLife, Tunisia). Over 500 people representing local governments, communities, businesses and civil society organizations in the Mediterranean hotspot contributed through a series of meetings, workshops and on-line consultation. The update of the ecosystem profile was financed by CEPF, the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and MAVA Fondation pour la Nature.

3. FIRST PHASE OF CEPF INVESTMENT: OVERVIEW AND LESSONS LEARNED

The ecosystem profile that guided the first phase of CEPF investment in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot was formulated in 2010, through an inclusive, participatory process that engaged more than 100 experts from civil society, donor and government stakeholders throughout the region. The CEPF investment, although regional in scope and ambition, was limited to 12 eligible countries, which was lower than the number initial envisioned in the ecosystem profile, due to security concerns and other reasons.

Lessons learned were monitored throughout the implementation of the first phase of CEPF investment, which ran from 2012 to 2017. A key exercise was the Mid-term Assessment[2], conducted 2015, which involved national assessments in 11 eligible countries, an online survey of CEPF grantees and unsuccessful applicants, and a regional workshop attended by more than 50 representatives of CEPF grantees, government officials, diplomats and donor partners.

3.1 Lessons learned at the portfolio level

Geographic focus

Political change, economic uncertainty and instability affected the implementation of the CEPF investment phase in many hotspot countries, and these factors are likely to continue to affect some countries in the next phase. Spreading grant making across multiple eligible countries, with flexibility in terms of timing and scope of calls for proposals, maximized CEPF's ability to take advantage of opportunities, while minimizing the risk of failing to meet portfolio-level targets due to political or security problems in particular countries.

Regarding the number of sites that should be prioritized for CEPF support, the experience from phase 1 suggests that it is necessary to prioritize at least 50 percent more sites for CEPF support than there are available resources for, because: it is not always possible to invest in sites initially prioritized, due to security reasons, evolution of the political situation or the lack of endorsement by national authorities; even when investment in a country is possible, it can happen that no suitable, competitive proposals are received; investments at some sites might not result in direct conservation impacts; and the evolving donor landscape can make CEPF investment at some sites no longer relevant.

Another lesson learned is that the operating environment for CSOs in some hotspot countries requires significant flexibility during implementation to allow for impactful investment. In Algeria, for example, the law limits the activity of NGOs, which can only work in the district where they are established. In Libya, the political and security situation prevented NGOs from working in the single priority corridor in the country, which led to CEPF deciding to accept projects from the western part of the country, and to adopt a flexible approach to supporting civil society.

[2] http://www.cepf.net/SiteCollectionDocuments/mediterranean/MED-MTA-Nov3.pdf

Furthermore, during all consultations regarding the mid-term assessment, long-term vision and the ecosystem profile update, as well as meetings of the CEPF Mediterranean Basin Advisory Committee, there was a broad consensus among civil society, donor and government representatives that CEPF should continue to focus attention on sites that have already received support from the fund, in order to build on success. They advocated including "continuity of action" as a criterion for prioritizing sites for CEPF investment during the second phase.

Management of CEPF programme

The Mid-term Assessment and routine grant and portfolio-level monitoring indicated clearly that CEPF's niche in the hotspot lies in providing support to local and national CSOs. A particular feature of the Mediterranean Basin is that international conservation organizations have the opportunity to access significant amounts of grant funding from various European Union funding mechanisms, as well as German cooperation, the GEF, the MAVA Foundation and others sources, thereby allowing them to implement regional programs and major projects at the national level. A partial exception is in the Balkans Sub-region, where the long-term vision exercise revealed that CEPF funding represents around one-third of the funding available to local environmental CSOs, with the remainder being dominated by EU funding for pre-accession activities, and grants to well established NGOs. Across the hotspot as a whole, very few funding sources exist for local and national CSOs wanting to engage in nature conservation, making CEPF a crucial source of support to these organizations. Within the overall CEPF portfolio, larger, higher capacity organizations have an important role to play as "mentoring structures", engaging local and grassroots CSOs through sub-grants, providing hands-on capacity building and supporting them to applying to small grant mechanisms.

Another important lesson is the importance to CEPF of continued (and, even, strengthened) collaboration with other programs working on environment with civil society, such as the GEF Small Grant Program, FFEM's Programme de Petites Initiatives (PPI), or GIZ's program for civil society in the Balkans.

Exchange of experience has proven to be important for building the capacities of individual NGOs, as well as for developing a stronger "conservation community", able to influence policy making and business. While social media and electronic mailing lists proved to be useful means of disseminating reports and diffusing analysis, stakeholder surveys underlined the importance of face-to-face exchanges. CEPF grantees found national workshops bringing together all CEPF grantees (and other stakeholders) working on conservation in a country to be particularly useful, and suggested that such workshops be organized in each country on an annual basis.

Regional meetings, tackling specific themes were also found to be beneficial, in particular for fostering collaboration for transboundary sites and via regional networks. During the first phase, several grantees were invited to build exchange visits with other CEPF grantee into their project design. This had great results in terms of alliance building and capacity strengthening, suggesting that this approach should be maintained or systematized during the new phase of funding. Participation in regional workshops organized by other regional initiatives (such as MedPAN, CAR-SPA, etc.) was also found to be helpful in enlarging the regional conservation community, by involving more local actors.

During the first phase of CEPF investment, there were several examples of "clustered" grant-making, where clusters of grants were made to CSOs with complementary skills to address the conservation of the same site. For instance, one CSO might carry out baseline surveys, feeding into the development of management recommendations by a second CSO specialized in advocacy, which in turn might inform the program of another CSO involved in community mobilization at the site. This proved to be an effective approach to leveraging the complementary skills and experience of different CSOs, in contexts where no single organization has the necessary capabilities vertically integrated. Going forwards, CEPF could build on the experience from phase 1 by placing emphasis on forging allegiances and partnerships among existing and new grantee partners, facilitating communication among partners across sectors, and stimulating common areas of work. This will be a particular focus of the RIT's role, and will require the RIT to take a strategic view of building a mutually reinforcing community of CSOs at local, national and regional level, that becomes less reliant upon external technical and financial support over time. One way for the RIT to do this might be to encourage collaborative projects involving two or more organizations from the proposal design stage.

Another clear lesson from the first phase is the importance of focusing on site-based action first, if grantees are to achieve policy impacts. Local CSO need first to demonstrate the efficiency of multi-stakeholder, integrated approaches at the local level. Upscaling these approaches and influencing policy-makers to incorporate key aspects into policies and plans happens only when local CSOs have gained the necessary skills and credibility at the local level. Ensuring impacts on policy also requires creative collaboration between local CSOs and organizations experienced in policy influence, which may come from other development sectors than environment. This calls for innovative partnerships and reaching beyond established audiences of conservation-oriented organizations.

Compared with influencing local and national government, the experience of grantees with the private sector was even more limited during first phase. This requires specific attention and efforts in the coming years. Based on the experience of phase 1, it appears important to: start at the local scale, with businesses that are rooted in the community and landscape; seek opportunities to promote the image of the industry at the same time as delivering conservation benefits; gather data that demonstrate to business the financial benefits of conservation action; and be creative in seeking opportunities for in-kind support from the private sector.

3.2 Lessons learned on thematic issues

The first phase of CEPF investment in the hotspot had a strategic direction focused on coastal regions, with investment priorities related to: implementing integrated coastal zone management; influencing the European tourism market; and enhancing local livelihoods through nature-based tourism. Although 37 projects were eventually funded under this strategic direction, experience showed that most CSOs did not have the capacity and credibility needed to address complex, multi-stakeholder conservation challenges at the level of entire coastal corridors. On lesson learned was that ICZM is a complex concept, which is poorly understood by many local CSOs, with little good explanatory material available in local languages. Starting with a site-focused approach and using this as a platform for engagement with wider planning and policy issues was shown to be an effective way of approaching the issue. A second lesson was that timing is key to success, and this

requires CSOs to be opportunistic. In several cases, there were no opportunities for CSOs to engage in ICZM, as there was no on-going government-led process at the priority sites and corridors, and CSOs themselves were not in a position to catalyze the launch of ICZM processes. A third lesson was that CSOs generally found it difficult to initiate or influence ICZM planning processes because these are the preserve of national governments, which, especially in North Africa, were not open to CSOs playing a leading role. A project with the objective of influencing ICZM is unlikely to have an impact unless there is a clear opportunity for engagement with concerned government agencies. This calls for relatively small-scale funding, available quickly to enable CSOs to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

The rapid growth in tourism in North Africa that was anticipated by the original ecosystem profile did not occur, primarily because of security concerns. The European tourism market was in flux during the first phase, influenced by political and economic developments in the EU and the countries of the hotspot as well as globally. As a result, the investment priority related to influencing the European tourism market proved hard to achieve and is now of less immediate relevance in some areas. The best results were obtained when local organizations were provided with the requisite means and support to achieve substantial results at the local level, thereby gaining in capacity and legitimacy. This established a basis for some of these organizations to start working at a larger scale and effectively participate in and influence government-led processes.

The first phase of CEPF investment also had a strategic direction focused on river basins, with investment priorities related to: implementation of integrated river basin initiatives; support for policies and capacity; new financing mechanisms for catchment management; and improvements to agricultural water use allowing sufficient water for environmental functions. Best practices were captured and shared with relevant stakeholders throughout the hotspot. A number of lessons were learned through grants under this strategic direction. The integrated river basin management approach is complex and few CSOs have both a full understanding of the concept and the skills required to implement it. There was a need for better definition of sites for threatened species, to facilitate identification of threats and potential mitigating actions, and maximize the impact of interventions on biodiversity conservation. Community awareness, and a demonstrated link between human development issues (e.g., water quality and availability) and conservation, were key to effective engagement of local people in conservation interventions. There was potential for private sector engagement, especially as part of sustainable financing, although more could have been done to realize this.

3.3 Lessons learned on period of investment

A key lesson was the continuity of funding over several years proved to be very important. This was achieved, in some cases, by extending the timeline of grants, to allow grantees more time to utilize grant funds, or approving cost-extensions to grants, where additional funds were needed to consolidate or build on success. In other cases, it was achieved by supporting consecutive grants to the same institution, to support different phases of a program of work. Ensuring continuity of funding appears to have been very important in allowing grantees to fully achieve their objectives and increase the sustainability of the results. This was particularly important in countries such as Algeria, where slow official endorsement and administrative complexity led to significant delays. It was also essential for initiatives involving protected area establishment or strengthening, for which three-years appeared to be the minimum implementation period necessary. Extending the

duration of CEPF support also allowed grantees to develop new activities related to experience sharing and capitalization of lessons learned.

4. BIOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN HOTSPOT

4.1 Diversity and endemism

The Mediterranean Basin is the third richest hotspot in the world in terms of its plant biodiversity (Mittermeier *et al.*2004), and one of the most important areas on Earth for endemic plants. It supports six terrestrial biomes: Mediterranean forests, woodlands and scrub is the most extensive, but there are smaller areas of dry broadleaf forests, mixed forests, coniferous forests, montane grasslands and deserts and xeric shrublands (WWF 2006). There are also four freshwater biomes: coastal rivers, temperate floodplain rivers and wetlands, xeric freshwaters and endorheic (closed) basins, and large river deltas (The Nature Conservancy 2011-2013). The exceptional biodiversity of the hotspot includes:

- 10% of the world's **plants** (about 25,000 species), almost half of which are endemic to the hotspot (Blondel *et al.* 2010). Many of the endemic and restricted-range plants depend on anthropogenic habitats, which are a result of thousands of years of human management. As a result, several species are threatened by land-use changes and rural abandonment (Sirami *et al.* 2010).
- Almost 300 **mammal** species, 38 of which are terrestrial endemics.
- 534 **bird** species, including 63 endemic species. Millions of migratory birds cross the hotspot on the East Atlantic; Black Sea-Mediterranean and East Africa-West Asia flyways
- Exceptional numbers of endemic **reptiles:** 117 of 308 species (almost 40%) are endemic. In the Macaronesian Islands (including Cabo Verde) 90% of reptile species are endemic.
- Very high numbers of **freshwater fish** species (622 in total), half of which are endemic to the hotspot, including many limited to single lake or river system.
- More than 600 **marine fish** species in the Mediterranean Sea, 74 of which are endemic to the sea. When the fish fauna of the eastern Atlantic part of the hotspot is included, the total for the hotspot is 1,122 species, 122 of them endemic to the hotspot.
- At least 629 species of **freshwater mollusks** are found in the region's ancient lakes, large river basins and artesian basins; 384 of them are endemic and many are threatened with extinction.
- 579 species of **dung beetles,** of which approximately 150 are endemic and 576 species of **saproxylic beetles**, with approximately 338 are endemic or almost endemic. Large numbers of butterflies and dragonflies.

4.2 Ecosystem services in the hotspot

Ecosystem services are frequently unrecognized and undervalued and, as a result, may be damaged or destroyed in the process of economic development. Traditional systems for maintaining these services (e.g. the *hima* system in North Africa for managing pasture) have often broken down as a result of state-imposed land categories, cultural and economic modernization and urbanization. The Mediterranean Basin is one of the most vulnerable regions of the world to climate change, and this will impact on the capacity of ecosystems to provide goods and services to human society

(Bangash *et al.* 2013), which is especially concerning given the increasing demands placed on ecosystems.

5. CONSERVATION OUTCOMES DEFINED FOR THE HOTSPOT

5.1 Introduction

Despite its uniqueness and fragility, the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot has to provide livelihoods for 200-300 million people in a region of global political and economic importance. Even with unlimited resources, it would be impossible to maintain all the species and ecosystems in the hotspot in their present state. Yet resources are highly limited, and conservation has to compete for space with land uses that are more economically productive. Choices need to be made, therefore, about which species, sites and corridors are the most important, feasible or urgent to conserve. These priorities (or "conservation outcomes") constitute a long-term agenda for the hotspot, which needs support from governments, civil society and funders. Over the next five years, within the limits of the available budget and with a focus on civil society, CEPF cannot address more than a small proportion of them, in the 14 eligible countries. Chapters 12 and 13 define more specifically which outcomes will be supported by CEPF in the coming five years.

5.2 Species outcomes

Species outcomes are all those species that regularly occur in the hotspot and are classified as globally threatened. The identification of these species was based on the IUCN Red List, by selecting species that occur in the hotspot and are classified as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable. Of the 5,786 species recorded from the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot for which there is a global assessment in the IUCN Red List, 1,311 (23%) are globally threatened (Table 5.1). Sixty percent of the threatened species are animals, with freshwater mollusks (320) and freshwater fishes (224), making up the greatest number of threatened species. In addition to the species listed in Table 5.1, 32 species from the hotspot are known to have become globally Extinct (EX), or Extinct in the Wild (EW): 11 freshwater fishes; two mammals; one reptile; 14 freshwater mollusks; and four plants.

The analysis highlights the importance and vulnerability of Mediterranean plants: only 7% of Mediterranean plants have been assessed for their conservation status (less in the south and east Mediterranean countries) but 28% of these are threatened.

5.3 Site outcomes

KBAs are sites that make significant contributions to the global persistence of biodiversity. KBAs are identified for biodiversity elements for which specific sites contribute significantly to their global persistence, such as globally threatened species or ecosystems. The identification of KBAs uses multiple criteria and sub-criteria, each with associated thresholds.

Table 5.1 Globally threatened species in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Group	No. of threatened species				% estimated completeness of IUCN Red List assessment at global (Mediterranean) level	% threatened species at global (Mediterranean) level
	CR	EN	VU	Total		
Vertebrates – total	**94**	**157**	**207**	**458**		
Amphibians	6	12	14	32	100	31
Birds	5	8	22	35	100	7
Freshwater fishes	60	83	81	224	96	37
Marine fishes **	7	15	46	68	100	7
Mammals	2	15	24	41	100	14
Reptiles	14	24	20	58	89	22
Invertebrates - total	**106**	**141**	**144**	**391**		
Anthozoans*	0	3	1	4	21 (97)	14 (13)
Dung beetles	1	21	3	25	29 (35)	15 (13)
Butterflies	1	14	12	27	35 (98)	17 (7)
Freshwater mollusks	103	98	119	320	(98)	(52)
Dragonflies and damselflies	1	5	9	15	(95)	(10)
Freshwater crabs and shrimps	0	0	0	0	100	0
Plants	**158**	**148**	**156**	**462**	7	28
TOTAL	**358**	**446**	**507**	**1,311**		

Notes: CR = Critically Endangered; EN = Endangered; VU = Vulnerable; * = Mediterranean Sea only; ** = Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea.

The revision of the site outcomes analysis was limited to the countries covered by the update of the ecosystem profile. KBA data for other countries in the hotspot were presented in the first ecosystem profile, and this data are used, where relevant, to give an overall picture of KBAs in the hotspot.

Since the 2010 ecosystem profile, there have been important changes, which affect the identification of KBAs. These include identification of Important Plant Areas in much of the hotspot, identification of freshwater catchment management zones and freshwater KBAs, and additions to the Red List of globally threatened species, leading to an increase in the list of species that trigger KBA identification.

In total, 533 KBAs were identified for the 16 countries and territories in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot covered by the update of the ecosystem profile, and 1,150 KBAs for the hotspot as a whole (Figure 5.1, Table 5.2).

KBAs represent an agenda for conservation of the most threatened biodiversity but they are not necessarily protected areas. The analysis shows that, of 438 KBAs present in countries with reliable data, 189 (43%) are entirely or partly within protected areas.

Figure 5.1 KBAs in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

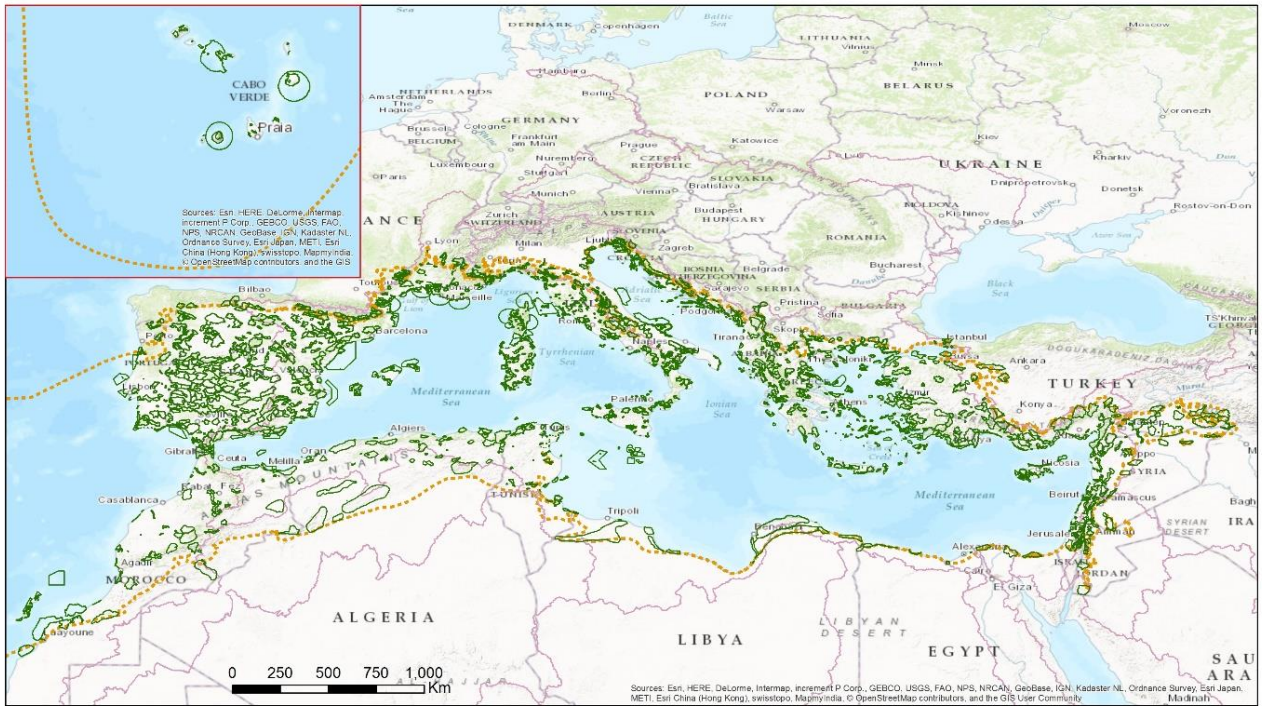


Table 5.2 Number and area of KBAs in the countries and territories of the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot covered by the ecosystem profile update

Country/Territory	No. of KBAs	Total land area of KBAs (km²)[1]	Land area in hotspot (km²)	% of hotspot land area in KBAs[1]
Albania	25	5,802	26,222	22%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9	851	4,910	17%
Montenegro	15	1,126	4,206	27%
The FYR Macedonia	14	1,729	5,567	31%
Kosovo	1	134	268	50%
Balkans sub-region	**64**	**9,642**	**41,173**	**23%**
Palestine	14	1,252	5,062	25%
Lebanon	19	3,426	10,136	34%
Jordan	13	2,186	9,560	23%
Syria	42	11,176	51,702	22%
Middle East sub-region	**88**	**18,040**	**76,460**	**24%**
Algeria	52	50,194	302,054	17%
Cabo Verde	29	671	4,056	17%
Egypt	10	321	3,742	9%
Libya	14	35,381	63,913	55%
Morocco	64	30,981	323,579	10%
Tunisia	65	4,342	81,885	5%
North Africa sub-region	**234**	**121,890**	**779,229**	**16%**
Turkey	147	74,488	268,999	28%
TOTAL	**533**	**224,060**	**1,165,861**	**19%**

Notes: 1 = Figures consider only the terrestrial portion of the hotspot, and exclude marine KBAs and portions of terrestrial KBAs that cover marine areas. Parts of KBAs that are outside the hotspot boundary are also excluded.

5.4 Corridor outcomes

Corridors represent higher spatial units necessary to maintain ecological and evolutionary processes at the landscape scale. In the 2010 Ecosystem Profile 17 Corridors were identified for the presence of highly threatened endemic species, key ecosystem services, importance in maintaining ecosystem resilience and their ability to safeguard the health and biological integrity of the hotspot. Of the 17 corridors identified in the 2010 ecosystem profile, five were modified and two were merged, in consultation with stakeholders at national and regional workshops. Hence, the 2016 update ecosystem profile includes 16 corridors (Table 5.3, Figure 5.2).

Table 5.3 Corridors and KBAs in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Corridor	Total corridor area (km^2)	Terrestrial area of corridor (km^2)	No. of KBAs	Terrestrial area of KBAs (km^2)	% of corridor in KBAs
Atlas Mountains	106,620	106,620	19	13,786	13%
Cabo Verde	42,738	4,056	29	656	16%
Coastal Atlantic Plains	13,297	12,860	9	2,221	17%
Cyrenaic Peninsula	30,107	27,196	10	20,951	77%
Dorsal and Telian Atlas	82,555	81,987	41	12,300	15%
Eastern Adriatic	23,402	19,111	14	1,088	6%
Marmara Sea Basin	60,516	45,456	20	7,099	16%
Nile Delta Coast	14,752	11,116	5	321	3%
Northern Mesopotamia	62,009	62,009	20	13,961	23%
Orontes Valley and Levantine Mountains	38,427	38,426	56	12,860	33%
Oranie and Molouya	17,163	15,305	12	6,022	39%
Saharian Atlas	61,902	61,902	5	21,931	35%
Southwest Balkans	37,807	35,475	46	8,210	23%
Rif Mountains	15,493	15,171	10	1,667	11%
Taurus Mountains	167,663	153,761	98	50,057	33%
Wetlands of Tunisia and Libya	35,030	24,421	18	1,447	6%
Total	**809,481**	**714,872**	**412**	**174,577**	**24%**

6. SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT OF THE HOTSPOT

6.1 Context

The Mediterranean region has a recorded history of more than 5,000 years and is the hub of past civilizations whose heritage and cultural landscape have made it unique in the world. The region is a highly fragmented region politically, demographically and socio-economically. There is north-south gap, with the economically rich states of the northern rim characterized by an ageing population, industrialized societies, expanding urban concentration and decreasing rural population. In these countries membership of the EU, or candidacy status, has contributed to peace, development of a social market economy and economic and environmental convergence. In contrast, the Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa are significantly poorer, with young, rapidly growing populations and a larger proportion of the population living in rural areas and

dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. However urban populations are increasing, especially in coastal areas, as large numbers of people migrate from the poorer south to the richer north. These flows have intensified in recent years due to political tensions and insecurity following the "Arab spring" uprisings. The process of political and economic integration that has occurred between the countries of the EU has no equivalent the Middle East and North Africa, which continue to be politically unstable.

Figure 5.2 Corridors in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

6.2 Demographic and social trends

The total population of the Mediterranean countries was 515 million in 2015. Of this total, more than half live in the countries of the southern and eastern shores of the region and this proportion is expected to increase to three quarters by 2025. Population density in the coastal regions of the Mediterranean is on average 120 people/km^2, as opposed to the national average of 58 people/km^2. In hotspot countries covered by the ecosystem profile update, the highest concentration of population is in the coastal areas of Middle-Eastern countries and parts of the North-African coast.

The region has traditionally been an area with strong migration flows into the EU member states, primarily from North African Maghreb countries and to a lesser extent from Western Balkan countries and Turkey. Over recent decades, these flows were dominated by economic migrants, but more recently and especially following the 'Arab spring' uprisings and wars in Syria and Libya, these flows have been more complex, involving large numbers of refugees.

6.3 Economic trends

There is a large difference between national GDPs north and south-east of the Mediterranean Sea. The balance is changing, with GDP growth rates of the countries covered by the ecosystem profile

update having been higher in recent decades than those of EU member states. However, the relatively high economic growth rates of the Middle Eastern and North African countries needs to be seen in relation to their rapid population growth rates. Per capita income remains over four times lower in the southern countries (around US$ 6,000) than in the north, and unemployment is a major economic and social problem throughout the region.

Economic development in the Mediterranean region is dominated by three sectors, all of them having a very large ecological footprint: (i) natural resource sector including agriculture, forestry and fishery, (ii) energy sector based on non-renewable sources, primarily oil and gas, as well as on renewable sources, primarily water but also wind, hydropower and solar energy, and (iii) services sector, primarily tourism and shipping.

In drier parts of the Mediterranean, agriculture relies heavily on use of areas of good soil and adequate rainfall or irrigation water but the need to produce sufficient food forces the population to use marginal land that is easily degraded.

7. POLICY CONTEXT OF THE HOTSPOT

7.1 Governance

Government institutions, legal systems and the place of environment within them have been influenced by the history of the region, which includes colonial periods and the influence of trade and interaction between Europe, Africa and the Arab world. Modern forms of government in the hotspot are diverse. Most countries are parliamentary republics. Algeria, Cabo Verde, Egypt, Syria and Tunisia are semi-presidential republics, while Jordan and Morocco are constitutional monarchies.

Every country in the region has institutions responsible for the management of natural resources and conservation of nature but there is frequently a divide between agencies responsible for conservation of biodiversity, those responsible for forestry and agriculture, and those responsible for other aspects of the environment, such as water, waste management and licensing of exploitation.

Decentralization of authority to lower levels of Government happens to varying degrees across the hotspot, with examples of highly centralized management of protected areas, but also delegation to local Governments, and in some countries NGOs mandated to run protected areas.

7.2 National legislation

The non-EU countries in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot are making significant progress in updating their environment policies and legislation. In the case of some Balkan states, this is motivated by their desire to become EU members. Elsewhere in the hotspot the picture is more variable. Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina have less well developed policy frameworks, although Turkey has made moves to encourage multipurpose use of forests. In the Middle East and North Africa, all the countries have legislation allowing creation of nature reserves and conservation of wildlife, as well as soil and forest protection, but Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have progressed since 2000 in amending and updating their environmental laws. The most recent nature

conservation laws in Libya were enacted in the 1990s, with laws on forest management and hunting even older. In Lebanon, new regulations banning land use change in forests aim to reduce burning.

All of the countries of the hotspot have declared protected areas as part of their efforts towards protecting the environment. The proportion of each country covered by PAs varies from less than 1% in Syria and Libya to over 17% in Albania and 30% in Morocco. Morocco's large extent of protected areas is a result of the four large Biosphere Reserves and the extensive network of Biological and Ecological Interest Sites.

Most of the focal countries have declared sites under international conventions including the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention. In Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro, there are more than 130 sites inside the Emerald Network of sites of Special Conservation Interest under the Bern convention.

8. CIVIL SOCIETY CONTEXT

8.1 General overview

CEPF's definition of civil society organizations (CSOs) includes many kinds of NGOs and voluntary organizations, philanthropic institutions, social movements, private businesses, media and professional organizations and cooperatives. These groups may be international, national or local. In most countries of the hotspot, there are examples of the work of: (1) international CSOs, which are based outside the hotspot but work within it (e.g. WWF, IUCN, etc.); (2) regional CSOs, which are based in one hotspot country but also work in other hotspot countries (e.g. Medmaravis, Medasset and Tour du Valat); (3) national CSOs working within their own country; and (4) local NGOs working on specific sites or within specific regions. There are multiple networks and collaborative relationships within and among these four groups, based on shared objectives, funding or exchange of skills and knowledge, and many initiatives for cross-border cooperation in nature conservation and sustainable development.

The legal and policy environment for CSOs varies widely, and has changed in several countries in recent years. Balkan countries within the hotspot are members of the Council of Europe and, thus, are parties to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which secures the right of association. All the hotspot countries in the Middle East and North Africa are members of the Arab League (formerly the League of Arab States), although Syria has been suspended since 2011. Since the adoption of the Arab Charter on Human Rights in 2004, recognizing the right of association, and, in particular, since the 2011 'Arab spring' uprisings, CSOs have sought to promote human rights in the Arab region through the Arab League. The league has shown increasing willingness to address critical issues facing the Arab world jointly with civil society, and declared 2016-2026 the Decade of Arab CSOs.

There are still only a small number of environmental NGOs in the focal countries, and even fewer are active on biodiversity issues. Academic interest in biodiversity conservation is well developed in most countries in the hotspot. In some areas (primarily the Balkans), academic stakeholders do much of the nature conservation activity, especially in countries where the NGO sector is comparatively underdeveloped. In North Africa and the Middle East, academic involvement is

more limited to research and publications, with less direct contribution to conservation action. In many cases, research centers and academic institutions have been 'incubators' for NGOs.

The private sector is an important component of civil society, partly responsible for unsustainable resource use but also with a stake in the sustainable management of resources. Corporate Social Responsibility funding is growing in the region and has had an important impact on the CSO activities. There are also examples of NGOs and other institutions working with private sector land owners to make their management of resources more sustainable and biodiversity friendly. Many companies have developed systems to support local NGOs or communities working on biodiversity conservation, working with CSOs directly or through associated foundations.

At the grassroots level, there are many local associations for development that also include aspects of sustainability and, often, the conservation of biodiversity, forest, wetlands and soils. These associations are frequently active only at the village level, and are found throughout the hotspot in many different forms.

8.2 Capacity needs

The potential role for CSOs is broadening in most countries of the hotspot. Increasingly, the challenge is the limited capacity of the civil society to take advantage of this opportunity, with the most important areas for institutional development among CSOs being human resources, management systems and strategic planning, partnerships, financial resources and transboundary cooperation. The greatest need is for financial resources and international cooperation, related in some cases to the difficulty in receiving funds from abroad.

In the Balkans, limits on the effectiveness of civil society are more a result of the geographical concentration of CSOs in capital cities, dependence on foreign donor support, limited internal capacity, and mixed relationships with government, which are often colored by a lack of trust on both sides. In addition, networking and cooperation among CSOs, as well as between CSOs and private sector organizations, is typically poor.

The Middle East's environmental NGO community has traditionally been characterized by a small number of quite well established organizations, often with close relations to government and a clear mandate for action. Despite this, many NGOs lack secure, independent funding.

The environmental NGO community in North Africa has historically been rather weak, making a relatively small contribution to conservation. At the same time, academic organizations have focused more on scientific research than conservation action.

8.3 Roles for civil society

During the ecosystem profile updating process, national stakeholders linked actions to identified threats, and then identified the roles that CSOs can play in addressing these threats:

- Monitoring ecosystems for planning and assessment; identification of priority areas.
- Monitoring the implementation of restrictions on hunting, logging, fishing and tourism development.

- Advising authorities on relevant issues in the fields of biodiversity and climate change.
- Promoting awareness and educating the public on relevant issues, e.g., wildfires, waste management, sustainable production, conservation in general, etc.
- Mainstreaming conservation into policy and planning: improving cooperation among CSOs; advocacy; legal actions; participation in public hearings; and participation in drafting of laws and land-use planning decisions.
- Restoring species populations and ecosystems (e.g., vulture feeding, native tree planting).
- Supporting development and marketing of products for a sustainable economy: farm products branding and labelling; sustainable tourism; traditional practices; and alternative sources of income.

9. THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY IN THE HOTSPOT

The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot countries have around 515 million inhabitants, 33% of which live on the Mediterranean coast. Combined with visits by 220 million tourists a year, the region experiences one of the heaviest pressures from visitors and residents on the remaining natural habitats encountered anywhere on earth. Partly as a result, the hotspot has the lowest percentage of natural vegetation remaining of any hotspot, less than 5%.

Activities associated with natural system modifications, pollution, and agriculture are the threats affecting the largest number of the threatened species in the hotspot. Species at risk of extinction in terrestrial environments are mainly threatened by agriculture (intensification and abandonment), urban development, natural systems modifications and invasive species. In freshwater environments, natural system modifications (such as dams), pollution, climate change and invasive species are the main threats. For the threatened species in marine environments, the main threats identified were overharvesting, climate change and invasive species.

Pressure on water resources. Large areas of freshwater habitats have been lost, degraded or fragmented, with a significant impact on biodiversity. Thirty-two percent of freshwater fishes in the Mediterranean Basin are threatened by dam construction. Water policies within the Mediterranean region are largely dominated by efforts to increase water supply and construct large water infrastructure but are reducing groundwater reserves and river and stream flows.

Fire and fire suppression. The Mediterranean Basin is one of the most fire-prone regions in the world and has a history of forest fires devastating large areas. Forest fires are expected to become more frequent and higher impact with climate change. Fragmentation and degradation have reduced the resilience of species populations to forest fires, and made re-colonization of burnt areas harder.

Pollution. The main sources of pollution in the Mediterranean Basin are sewage and wastewater from urban sources, pesticide and nutrient additives from agriculture, heavy metals and oils from industrial facilities, toxic chemicals from mining operations, and solid waste from a variety of sources. Freshwater ecosystems, being the lowest points in each catchment, are the recipients of much land-based pollution, with impacts to their species occurring through pollution and eutrophication of surface and ground waters.

Agricultural intensification and land abandonment. Intensification is generally associated with high yields but also with significant changes to the natural environment, which result in loss of biodiversity. Land abandonment causes the loss of cultivated landscapes and corresponding habitats, such as steppes, montane grasslands, Iberian dehesas and Mediterranean shrublands.

Infrastructure and residential development. Urbanization, associated with population migration and the development of the tourist industry, has exposed previously sparsely inhabited areas of coastline to intense pressure from land-use change.

Transport infrastructure and service corridors. These developments cause fragmentation of natural habitats, which has negative consequences for habitat selection, abundance and species diversity, and limits or disrupts migration and dispersal of individuals.

Biological resource use. This includes logging, overfishing, hunting of birds and mammals, and collection of commercially valuable wild plants

Invasive alien species. These species pose a threat to marine and freshwater systems in particular but also to terrestrial plants.

The underlying drivers of threats include population growth and movements, rapid economic growth, increased consumption and unequal access to resources, poor governance of natural resources, and under-valuation of ecosystem services in decision making.

10. CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 Projected future climate change

The Mediterranean Basin climate is characterized by cold, wet winters and prolonged hot, dry summers. In recent decades, there has been an increase in hot days across the northern Mediterranean and an overall increase in dryness. At the same time, the southern Mediterranean has experienced annual and seasonal warming trends that are significantly beyond the range of changes due to natural variability, and some areas have experienced a strong decrease in the amount of winter and early spring precipitation. There is significant agreement between climate models under all emissions scenarios that temperatures in the Mediterranean Basin will increase. Based on an intermediate emissions scenario, temperatures could be 3.5 to 7°C higher than 1961-1990 levels by the end of the century for the eastern Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa, with the Balkans and Turkey exhibiting the largest temperature increase. The region is also likely to receive less annual precipitation, resulting in a consistent increase in drought area. The northern Mediterranean is likely to become 10% wetter in winter but 30% drier in summer, while the southern Mediterranean will endure a small decrease in precipitation year round.

In marine ecosystems, the Mediterranean Sea is characterized by a homogenous layer of water below about 300 meters, which remains at a constant temperature and salinity year round. Over the last decade, however, the temperature and salinity of this layer has risen significantly year on year. Surface temperatures have also been changing, with an observed increase of almost 1°C since the 1980s. By the end of the 21st century, sea surface temperatures are predicted to rise by an

average of 2.5°C relative to today, salinity of surface, intermediate and deep layers is expected to rise, and acidity is likely to continue to increase due to continuing CO_2 emissions.

10.2 Projected impacts on biodiversity

The impact of increased temperatures and reduced precipitation in the Mediterranean region will be widespread, affecting human and natural systems. One consequence already observed, and of particular importance for conservation of the hotspot's biota, is a significant increase in the extent and frequency of wildfires since the 1970s.

In southern Europe, including the Mediterranean Basin, there is projected to be a great reduction in diversity of plant, bird and mammal assemblages, which will not be offset by gains expected in regions of high latitude or altitude, resulting in a trend towards homogenization across the continent. Mountain ecosystems and wetlands are the most threatened but there may also be significant changes in the species composition of forests. Shrublands are expected to increase significantly. In marine ecosystems, continued warming and changes in salinity will cause loss of deep, cold water species and favor more adaptable and widespread species, many of them from the Atlantic.

10.3 Action by civil society

Climate change poses both direct and indirect risks to human societies, including with regard to agricultural production, public health, and infrastructure. Conservation in the Mediterranean hotspot must explicitly mitigate the threat of climate change, as well as contributing to adaptation. Actions that can be taken or promoted by civil society include:

- Strengthening the management of existing protected areas (and establishing new ones) as refugia for species under pressure from climate change.
- Improving connectivity among protected areas and other key sites to provide opportunities for species to migrate to more suitable climates.
- Conserving and restoring ecosystems to reduce emissions and increase carbon sinks.
- Demonstrating ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation, such as sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems.

11. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT CONSERVATION INVESTMENT

11.1 Introduction

Funding is available for biodiversity conservation from official aid donors, multi-lateral funds, and private foundations. Data on the types and amounts of funding is patchy and inconsistent, but a best estimate for 2014 is that around US$274 million was spent on biodiversity conservation or closely related projects in the countries covered by the ecosystem profile update.

Table 11.1 Indicative estimate of the funds invested in biodiversity conservation in 2014 in the countries covered by the ecosystem profile update

Category of funding source	Amount (million US$)	Main contributors
Bilateral ODA funds	100	AFD, FFEM, USAID,

Multi-donor funds	144	GEF, CEPF
Private foundations	32	MAVA,
TOTAL	**274**	

Note: Many of the figures included are the total value of multi-year projects, and do not represent the funds available for conservation in that year but, rather, commitments made during that year.

11.2 Major Sources of Conservation Investment in the Hotspot

Bilateral donors

At least 29 bilateral donors contributed net Official Development Assistance (ODA) of almost US$21 billion to the region in 2014. Six donors were responsible for US$18.6 billion (89%) of this total: EU; UAE; Turkey; USA; Germany; and France.

European Union. Globally, the EU remains the largest contributor to biodiversity-related ODA, and is committed to the CBD target (the 'Hyderabad commitment') of doubling biodiversity-related flows to developing countries by 2015, based on an average from 2006 to 2010, and of maintaining this level until 2020.

France. AFD is one of the six main contributors of ODA to the focal countries of the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. Of around 120 projects funded in the North Africa and Middle East sub-regions, about half are related to environmental issues (water, sanitation, pollution, etc.). Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) funds projects in the areas of climate change (both energy and land use related), international waters, biodiversity, land degradation and POP. Eight projects from the climate change and biodiversity funds are being implemented (or recently ended) in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot.

Japan. Globally, Japan was one of the four largest contributors of bilateral ODA for biodiversity conservation during 2012-2014. Only one biodiversity-related project has been funded in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot in recent years, however.

Germany. Globally, Germany was the largest bilateral donor to biodiversity conservation projects during 2012-2014. The Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ) and Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMU) fund projects related to biodiversity through the German aid program, and BMU also funds through the International Climate Initiative. Other German assistance for environment is in the context of climate change, and specifically renewable energy.

Spain, the **UK** and the **USA** all make some contributions to programs that target or impact positively on the environment. **Turkey** and the **UAE** are major donors in the region but focus exclusively on humanitarian and economic aid.

Multilateral donors

GEF. The GEF has invested around US$440 million in biodiversity-related activities in the hotspot countries covered by the ecosystem profile update since the fund's creation, through 87 single-country projects and 37 regional ones. Currently, 28 single-country projects (with a total GEF investment of US$100 million) are being implemented, although none in Libya, Palestine or Syria. There are GEF Small Grants Programs in 12 of the countries covered by the ecosystem profile

update, although none in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro or Libya. These 12 programs have made 1,772 grants to local civil society organizations since 1993, with a total value of US$46.6 million, at an average of US$26,000 per grant. The GEF Small Grants Program funds a broad range of activities but projects in the biodiversity focal area are the majority in every country except Egypt, where climate change mitigation makes up 75%.

Development banks. The World Bank is a major donor in the region, with activities in all but two of the countries covered by the ecosystem profile update. More than 72 projects under the environment and resource management theme are active in 11 countries, in addition to three regional projects.

Private foundations. A small number of private foundations are amongst the most important funders of biodiversity conservation in the hotspot. The MAVA Foundation has been a major supporter of conservation action in the hotspot but will cease funding, at least in its present form, in 2022. Consequently, the foundation's current (2016-2022) strategy focuses on mainstreaming and replicating successful approaches. Other supporters of conservation work in the hotspot include the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the Nando Perretti Foundation, the Thalassa Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Hima Fund, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and the Rufford Foundation.

CEPF. CEPF's first investment in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, from 2012-2017, resulted in the award of 108 grants to 84 different organizations in 12 countries, for a total investment of U$11 million. CEPF-funded actions contributed directly to improved management of sites, conservation of critically endangered species, improved policies for the environment, and greater collaboration and regional networking among CSOs.

11.3 Trends and gaps in investment in the hotspot

Although the world's first and second largest bilateral funders of biodiversity conservation, Germany and the USA, are major donors to the region, their primary focus is not biodiversity. Germany's International Climate Fund is an important exception, however. Among multilateral donors, the GEF provides by far the largest volume of biodiversity funding, with 28 projects, totaling US$136 million, under implementation. GEF large- and medium-size projects have a strong emphasis on landscape-level approaches and ecosystem services, and the pipeline projects show that the proportion dedicated to marine ecosystems will increase in future.

While it is difficult to give an exact figure, it is clear that more funding is required in the hotspot. CEPF is addressing a vital niche, empowering and engaging civil society, and funding actions to conserve sites and species but a great deal more work needs to be done.

12. CEPF'S NICHE FOR INVESTMENT

The definition of the CEPF niche in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot is guided by the global objectives of the program, to provide rapid and flexible funding to civil society to act in areas

where globally significant biodiversity is under the greatest threat, and informed by the experience gained during the first CEPF investment phase.

12.1 Eligible countries

CEPF support is available for conservation action within the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot in those countries that are signatories to the CBD and also World Bank client members, excluding de facto EU Member States and their territories and the independent countries of Mediterranean Europe (Andorra, San Marino, Monaco, etc.). The security situation in some countries also currently precludes effective grant making to civil society, although this may change during the coming five years. Table 12.1 summarizes the eligibility of hotspot countries for CEPF support.

Table 12.1 Eligibility of countries covered by the ecosystem profile update for CEPF support

Sub-region	Country	Eligibility for CEPF support in Phase 2
Balkans	Albania	Eligible
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Eligible
	Kosovo	Not currently eligible, not a signatory to the CBD
	FYR of Macedonia	Eligible
	Montenegro	Eligible
Middle East	Israel	Not eligible (not a World Bank client member)
	Jordan	Eligible
	Lebanon	Eligible
	Palestine	Not eligible (not a World Bank member)
	Syria	Not currently eligible due to the security situation
North Africa	Algeria	Eligible
	Cabo Verde	Eligible
	Egypt	Eligible
	Libya	Eligible (but with geographic limitations on western part of the country due to the security situation)
	Morocco	Eligible
	Tunisia	Eligible
Turkey	Turkey	Eligible

12.2 Theory of change for CEPF in the Mediterranean Hotspot

The overall Theory of Change for the program is based around influencing the behavior of state actors, private sector actors, and local civil society, to encourage and enable them to use their influence for the benefit of biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability. The specific changes that are hoped for in each of these groups, and the role of CEPF grantees in achieving these changes, are described below.

The state is a manager of protected areas. The priority is to improve the management effectiveness of existing protected areas. The role of CEPF grantees includes forming coalitions between protected areas staff, local government and interest groups, such as hunting associations or tourism businesses.

The state is also responsible for managing significant areas of land as forest reserves, watershed reserves or other schemes. The priority is to integrate biodiversity into their management plans and practices. Here, CEPF grantees can provide information and assistance.

The state is the legislator and regulator of natural resource use. The priority is to strengthen laws and regulations, and make implementation more effective. CEPF grantees can contribute by supplying information and case studies but there is also role for the CEPF Secretariat and the RIT to assist grantees communicate their results to local governments, and help local CSOs engage with national, regional and international processes.

The role for private sector actors may be improved management practices, reducing their footprint, or providing support to conservation. Establishing long-term relationships of support between companies and particular sites or species is an important way to promote sustainability.

Local civil society groups are direct beneficiaries of CEPF involvement, and partners in resource management. CEPF engagement aims to identify shared concerns on biodiversity conservation, build capacity, and contribute to sustainable improvements in livelihoods.

12.3 Strategic focus for the program, 2017-2022

Four strategic considerations shape the overall program:

Supporting local and national organizations in a regional context. CEPF will focus support on local and national civil society, with granting to international organizations limited to actions that either require specific expertise not yet available in the eligible countries, or have the main objective of transferring skills and capacities to local or national partners. Capacity building will be delivered as part of specific project grants, and through 'north-south' and 'south-south' exchanges between sites and CSOs.

Strategic engagement with the private sector. Lessons from Phase 1 are to: start at the local scale, with businesses that are rooted in the community and landscape; seek opportunities to promote the image of the industry/business at the same time as delivering conservation benefits; gather data that demonstrates to business the financial benefits of the action; and be more creative in seeking opportunities for in-kind support from business. The growing market for fair trade and sustainably produced goods may provide opportunities to incentivize farmers and land managers to adopt biodiversity-friendly approaches, although the limitations of eco-labeling are recognized and dependence on achieving a price-premium needs to be avoided.

Building on local actions to achieve policy impacts. There is a need for specific actions to build on site-based projects to address the wider policy, funding and programmatic issues, with roles for the RIT, partners and grantees. The program will facilitate links between grantees and decision makers, contribute to partnerships and on-going processes of planning and reform, and promote the role and acceptance of the value of CSOs more generally.

Managing risk. Two important risks for the program are committing resources to too many projects, and the volatile political and security situation in several countries of the hotspot. The profile proposes to manage these risks by: focusing on a limited set of high priority sites; focusing

on site-based action; spreading the geographic risks by investing across the eligible countries; and creating opportunities for synergy among grants.

13. CEPF INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS, 2017-2022

CEPF support to conservation action in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot will be focused on three priority ecosystems (coastal, freshwater and traditionally managed landscapes), a species group (plants), and a supporting thematic focus (regional networking). Underpinning these strategic directions are three cross-cutting priorities: a focus on site-based conservation action; integration of CSO capacity building into projects; and attention to sustainability and mainstreaming of impacts. The strategic directions and investment priorities for the CEPF investment program during 2017-2022 are presented in the following table.

Table 13.1 Strategic directions and investment priorities for CEPF in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, 2017-2022

Strategic direction	Investment priorities
1: Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the preservation of biodiversity in coastal areas.	1.1: Engage local stakeholders in conservation actions that address threats to key elements of biodiversity in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.
	1.2: Engage private sector stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices that deliver positive impacts for conservation in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.
	1.3: 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: Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity.	2.1: Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services.
	2.2: Take action to reduce threats and improve management of selected sites in priority freshwater catchments with the participation of local stakeholders.
	2.3: Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority CMZs.
3: Promote the maintenance of traditional land use practices necessary for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of high cultural and biodiversity value.	3.1: Support local communities to increase the benefit they receive from maintaining and enhancing traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use and agricultural practices.
	3.2: 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.
	3.3: Encourage business actors in the trade chain to support and promote traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.
4: Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the conservation of plants that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges.	4.1: 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.
	4.2: Support integration of plant conservation into the management of protected areas.
	4.3: Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with land owners and managers.

Strategic direction	Investment priorities
5: Strengthen the regional conservation community through the sharing of best practices and knowledge among grantees across the hotspot.	5.1: Support regional and thematically-focused learning processes for CSOs and stakeholders.
	5.2: Support grantees to understand and engage with international conventions and processes.
6: Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a Regional Implementation Team.	6.1: Build a constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile.
	6.2: Act as a liaison unit for relevant networks throughout the Mediterranean to harmonize investments and direct new funding to priority issues and sites.

Strategic Direction 1. Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the preservation of biodiversity in coastal areas

Main focus, justification and impact

This strategic direction addresses some of the most threatened sites and ecosystems in the hotspot: those in the coastal zone. Coastal ecosystems are under increasing pressure from human population growth and migration, the growth of tourism, and associated urbanization and pressure on land and water resources. The specific threats in the coastal region are: (1) direct over-exploitation of biodiversity; (2) direct damage to sites through conversion of coastal habitats to intensive agricultural land, building land, and infrastructure; and (3) actions that take place outside key sites but impact on them, such as abstraction of water, dumping of solid waste and water pollution.

Geographic focus

Given the intense and widespread nature of the threats to many coastal KBAs, most actions under this strategic direction will focus on preserving specific, high-priority KBAs where key elements of biodiversity (i.e., threatened species and ecosystems) are under pressure but where there is also a realistic prospect of making a difference.

Priority KBAs under this strategic direction were identified from a sub-set of 165 coastal KBAs that included land below 300 meters in altitude less than 20 kilometers from the coastline. The coastal KBAs were then ranked according to their biological importance, and level of threat (using ratings assigned by participants at the national consultative workshops). The sites were also evaluated for feasibility of conservation action, taking into account security (insecurity led to the exclusion of three sites in eastern Libya, for example), opportunities for investment, and presence of civil society partners. On the basis of these criteria, 31 KBAs in nine countries were identified as priorities for CEPF support (Table 13.2, Figure 13.1).

Table 13.2 Coastal KBAs prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 1

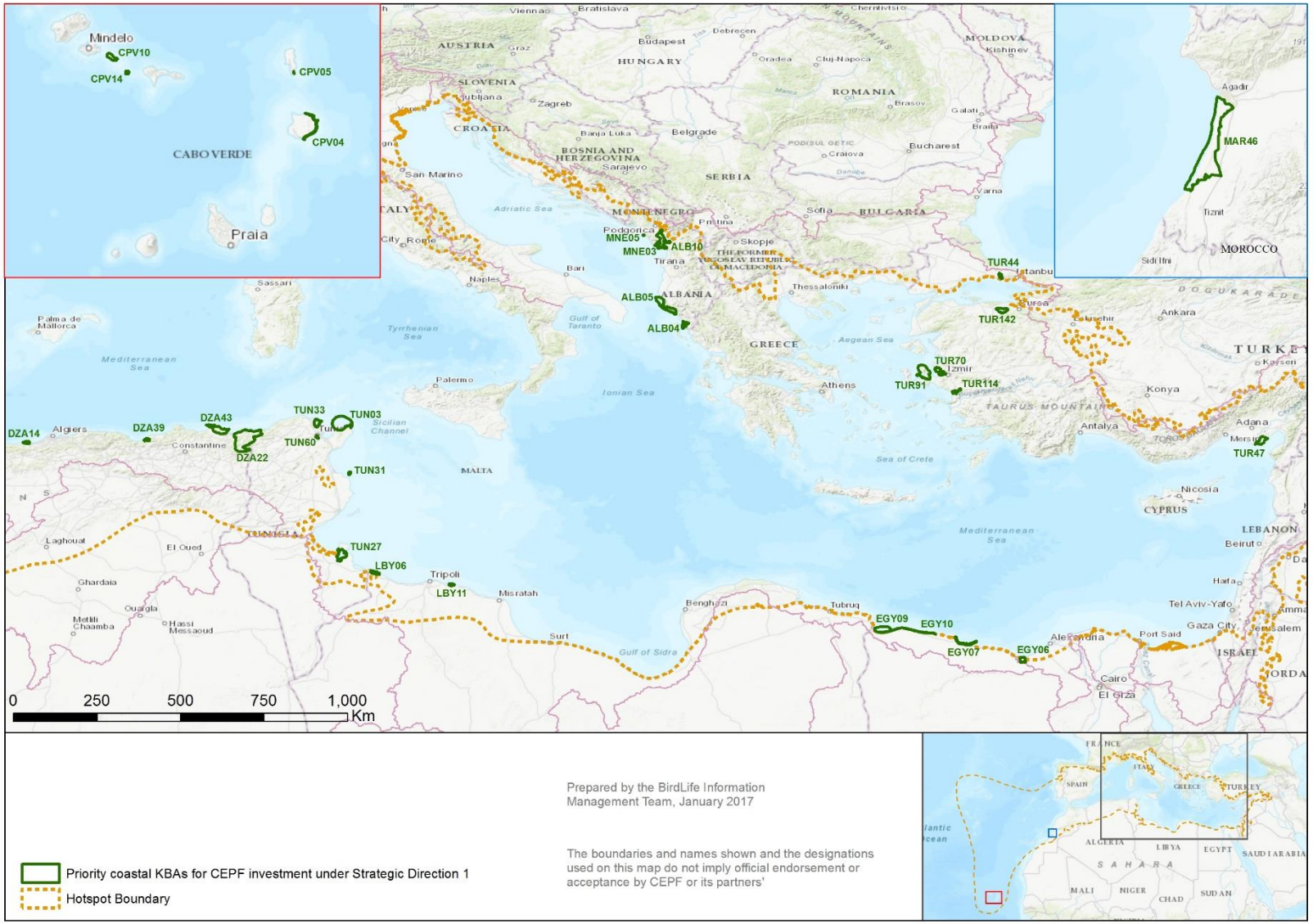
Country	KBA code	KBA name
Albania	ALB04	Gjiri i Sarandës - Parku Kombëtar Butrint
Albania	ALB05	Gjiri i Vlorës - Gadishulli i Karaburunit - Ishulli i Sazanit - Mali i Çikës
Albania	ALB10	Liqeni i Shkodrës – Lumi i Bunës-Velipojë - Vau i Dejës
Algeria	DZA14	Djebel Chenoua
Algeria	DZA22	El Kala - Tarf

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	Delta Bojane
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 Sejoumi
Turkey	TUR44	Büyükçekmece Lake
Turkey	TUR47	Ceyhan Delta
Turkey	TUR70	Gediz Delta
Turkey	TUR91	Karaburun and İldir Strait Islands
Turkey	TUR114	Lesser Menderes Delta
Turkey	TUR142	Uluabat Lake

Investment Priority 1.1 Engage local stakeholders in conservation actions that address threats to key elements of biodiversity in priority KBAs in the coastal zone

Coastal ecosystems are typically used by local people for fisheries, agriculture, and hunting. Other resources, such as sand and gravel, may also be extracted, and there may be non-exploitative uses, such as recreational use, that, nevertheless, create disturbance and other problems. Actions under this investment priority will include negotiating changes in damaging practices and supporting changes in management regimes through improved planning, awareness and enforcement of agreed rules. They will encourage sustainable use where possible, and may introduce new uses that increase the value of the site to local stakeholders.

Figure 13.1 Map of coastal KBAs prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 1



Investment Priority 1.2 Engage private sector stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices that deliver positive impacts for conservation in priority KBAs in the coastal zone

Threats to coastal zone species and ecosystems are, to a large extent, driven by private sector investment in infrastructure and land use associated with tourism, expanding urbanization, recreational land use, industrialization, and infrastructure development. The value of the coastal zone for these investments derives partly from the quality of the natural environment, including clean water, green spaces, clean seas and beaches. The private sector has an interest, therefore, in the improved management of the environment, and the challenge for conservation is to align conservation priorities (preservation of threatened species and ecosystems at priority sites) with the interests of private sector. The experience from Phase 1 was that smaller and more local companies were more approachable and more likely to respond positively. Consequently, these will be the focus under this investment priority.

Actions under this investment priority are likely to be carried out in conjunction with ones under IP1.1, and may include establishment of collaborative relationships with private sector actors to promote more sustainable practices (e.g., improved water use, recreational use, etc.) and financial support for conservation as part of ensuring a healthy natural environment.

This investment priority may be particularly significant for protected areas in the coastal zone where private sector actors are prepared to contribute to management costs or otherwise support the conservation of the site.

Investment Priority 1.3 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

While site-level conservation actions and engagement of private sector actors will address the conservation needs of specific priority sites and species, government decisions on planning and zoning of land use and development are particularly important in the coastal zone, because it is under such intense pressure from private sector investment and government schemes. The results of projects from Phase 1 and the anticipated actions under IP1.1 and IP1.2 present an opportunity to influence government decision making at the level of regional development plans and land-use zoning. While the bulk of resources under this strategic direction will be allocated to IP1.1 and IP1.2, CEPF will also support CSOs to engage with government planning processes where there are clear opportunities to do so.

CEPF support under this investment priority will be available for coastal planning and management process where the area concerned contains one or more KBAs, whether or not these KBAs are prioritized for site-based action under IP1.1 and IP1.2.

Strategic Direction 2. Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity

Main focus, justification and impact

Nearly one-third of the Critically Endangered species found in the hotspot are freshwater animals and plants. They occur in a wide range of freshwater ecosystems, including rivers, lakes, karst cave systems, ephemeral desert water courses and coastal marshes. The need for freshwater for agriculture and human consumption is one of the most persuasive reasons for the sustainable management of natural resources. Nevertheless, the hotspot's freshwater

ecosystems are poorly represented in national protected areas networks, they are under pressure from over-use and pollution, and the species that live in them suffer from over-exploitation and disturbance. Climate change is likely to make these problems worse.

Some of the actions required to address these problems are national or international in scale, and cannot be tackled effectively by CSOs. CEPF investments in the first phase showed, however, that CSOs can be effective when working at defined sites or with existing authorities, such as protected area management agencies, or agencies charged with river basin management or water resource conservation. Once sustainable use of water resources is agreed, there can be strong alignment between the needs of threatened biodiversity and human development (e.g., for adequate supplies of clean water).

Geographic focus

There have been significant improvements in the identification and definition of catchments in the hotspot, which have allowed the identification and delineation of 100 catchment management zones (CMZs). The CMZ were ranked according to their biological importance, producing a shortlist of 41 CMZs. These shortlisted CMZs were then assigned a threat score and an aggregate score based on funding need, management need, civil society capacity, operational feasibility, alignment with national priorities, and opportunity for landscape-level conservation. On the basis of these scores, the 24 highest ranked CMZs were prioritized for CEPF support (Figure 13.2, Table 13.3).

Investment Priority 2.1 Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services

Information on the distribution, population and threat status of freshwater biodiversity within priority CMZs is, in many cases, inadequate to allow identification of the most urgent sites for conservation action, or to act as a baseline against which to judge improvements. In addition, the biological, social and economic values of ecosystem services from intact water catchments are poorly understood and not widely appreciated by decision makers. CEPF will support grantees to collect this information as a first step towards taking conservation action.

Investment Priority 2.2 Take action to reduce threats and improve management of selected sites in priority freshwater catchments with the participation of local stakeholders

CSOs supported by CEPF grants are most likely to be able to take direct conservation action at specific sites, where working with management agencies or local stakeholders can change behavior and reduce the impact of specific threats.

Investment Priority 2.3 Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority CMZs

Although the most appropriate level for direct action by CSOs is at clearly defined sites, the connectivity of freshwater systems makes it highly likely that action will also be needed at the river basin level to address problems with water quality, water volume and flow and disturbance to habitat. This will involve influencing those actors from government and/or the private sector who are involved with or have the authority to influence these issues.

Figure 13.2 Map of CMZs prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 2

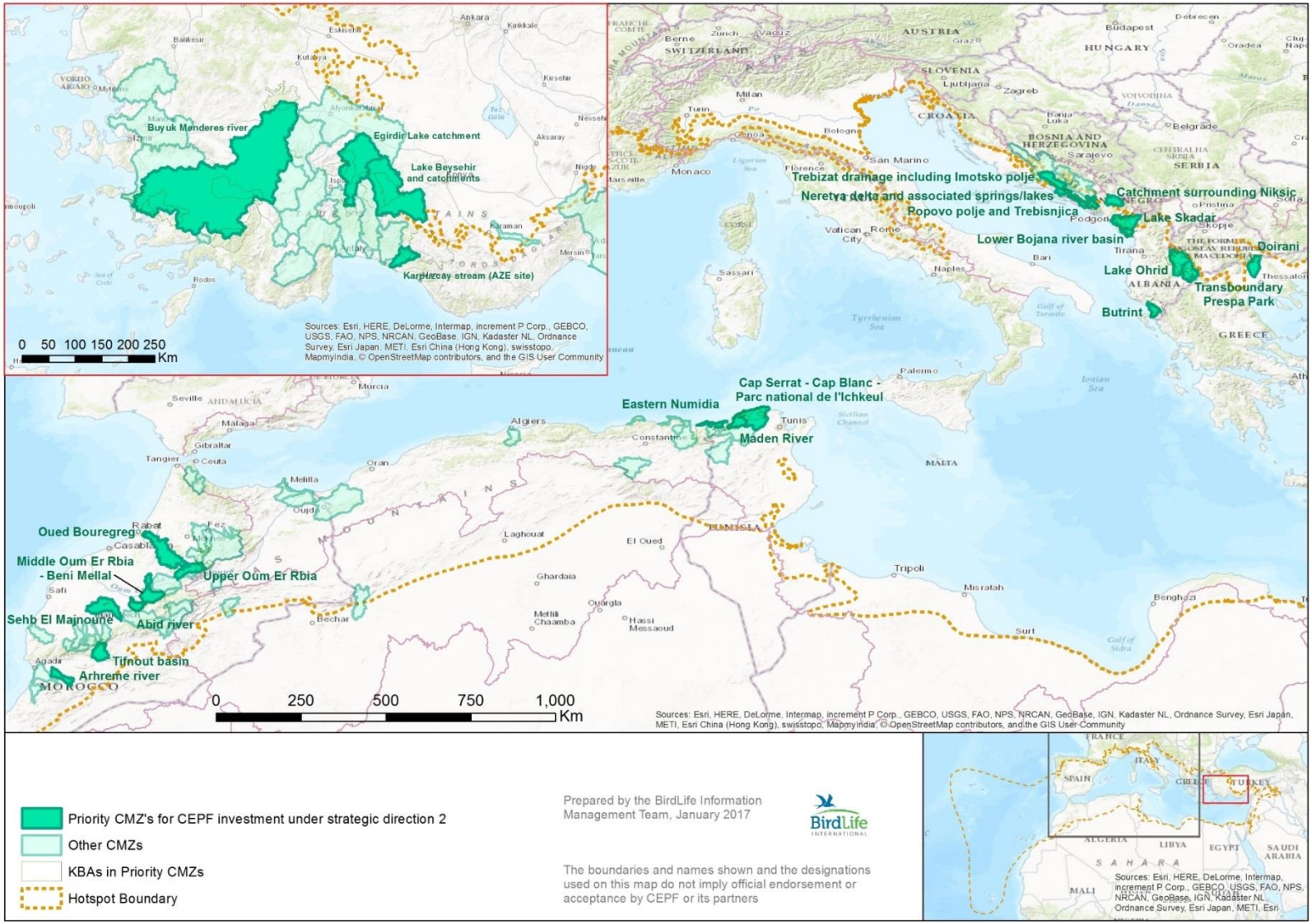


Table 13.3 CMZs prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 2

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
Turkey	Büyük Menderes River
Turkey	Eğirdir Lake catchment
Turkey	Karpuzcay stream
Turkey	Lake Beysehir catchment

Note: * = Country not eligible for CEPF support.

Strategic Direction 3. Promote the maintenance of traditional land use practices necessary for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of high cultural and biodiversity value

Main focus, justification and impact

Mediterranean biodiversity has evolved with human land-use practices over several thousand years, to the extent that many threatened species are dependent on habitats maintained by agriculture, seasonal grazing or harvesting of wild products. The species that depend on these anthropogenic systems can become threatened when an established management system is abandoned and vegetation succession occurs, when traditional sustainable practices change and cause degradation and erosion (e.g., over-grazing), or when modern agricultural and land use practices, including the use of irrigation and agrochemicals, replace traditional practices and eliminate the opportunity for wild biodiversity to co-exist with agricultural systems. Under this strategic direction, CEPF will support CSOs to work with local community land managers and local businesses to pioneer innovative ways to sustain the elements of traditional land use practices that are important for biodiversity.

Geographic focus

Traditional management survives throughout the region, often in places affected by emigration, marginalization and rural poverty. To maximize the value of projects in demonstrating innovative approaches to land management, four corridors were selected where elements of traditional management systems are still the main land use (Table 13.4, Figure 13.3). The selection of these corridors also gave consideration to opportunities for complementing funding from FFEM and the MAVA Foundation.

Table 13.4 Corridors prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 3

Corridor	Countries	Corridor area (km^2)	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
The Taurus Mountains	Turkey	167,530	107

Note: * = Country not eligible for CEPF support.

Investment Priority 3.1 Support local communities to increase the benefit they receive from maintaining and enhancing traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use and agricultural practices

The core of this strategic direction is working with traditional resource managers to enable them to enhance their livelihoods through maintaining biodiversity-rich traditional practices. The key approach will be to enable resource users to increase their income, through improvements to processing and marketing of products, including through certification and labelling, as well as exploring opportunities such as payment for environmental services, and enabling resource users to access government support. Lessons on the limitations of eco-labelling approaches and the importance of securing market access will inform assessment of project proposals under this investment priority.

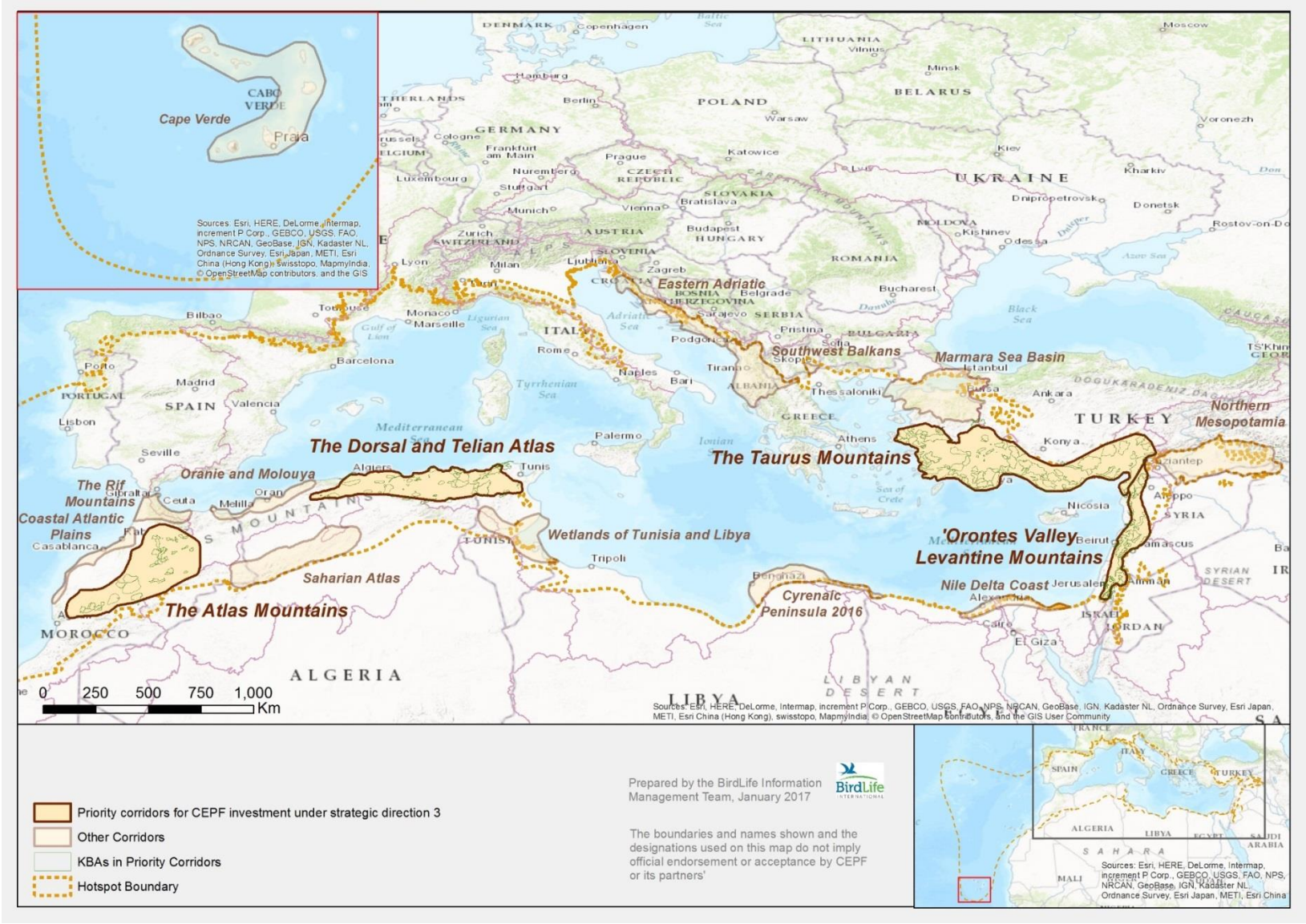
Investment Priority 3.2 Promote awareness of the value of traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices among local community and government decision makers, to secure their recognition and support

While resource users and managers will be the main beneficiaries of projects under this strategic direction, it is also important to promote the importance of and rationale for traditional, biodiversity-friendly practices among a wider group of actors at local government level, as they are likely to have an important role in encouraging and sustaining them. They may also be able to support formation of user groups, and these groups' applications for government grants and services. Where an initiative is located in a protected area, the protected area manager may be in a position to encourage collaborative management of natural resources. Finally, local community leaders may have a strong influence over resource users' individual decisions on whether to continue or abandon traditional practices.

Investment Priority 3.3 Encourage business actors in the trade chain to support and promote traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices

Businesses that buy, process and sell the products of traditional land-use practices have a key role to play in ensuring the sustainability of this incentive-based approach, and in providing the infrastructure through which a significant number of resource users can be engaged, thereby allowing it to achieve an impact at the level of a corridor, KBA or species population. The engagement and support of actors in the trade chain will enable successful demonstration approaches facilitated with CEPF support to be scaled up, and sustained into the long term.

Figure 13.3 Map of corridors prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 3



Strategic Direction 4. Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the conservation of plants that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges

Main focus, justification and impact

The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot is defined primarily on the basis of the presence of its unique botanical communities, with an exceptionally high number of endemic plants. While plants will benefit along with other species from CEPF investments under SD1, SD2 and SD3, the level of threat and the lack of attention to the specific conservation needs of plants to date justify a separate strategic direction focused on this group. In addition to supporting direct conservation action, projects under this strategic direction will also strengthen the botanical knowledge and skills of scientists, conservationists and land managers.

The limited range and very specific habitat requirements of some threatened plants means that their conservation can be tackled effectively by local CSOs working on the ground with limited resources, often in partnership with protected areas managers or local land owners. Of the 25,000 plant species that occur within the hotspot, CEPF grant making will focus on Critically Endangered species and endemic species with a restricted range.

Investment Priority 4.1 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

One of the challenges in continuing the process of identifying IPAs, assessing the conservation status of plants, and taking action for their conservation, is the limited number of people in the region with the necessary botanical skills. CEPF will support projects that have a strong element of developing practical botanical skills, including survey, *in situ* protection and, in some cases, *ex situ* protection. This will involve working with traditional educational institutions (i.e., universities, research institutes, etc.), as well as working to improve the skills of other groups with the potential to contribute to plant conservation, including protected areas managers, members of voluntary societies and land managers.

Investment Priority 4.2 Support integration of plant conservation into the management of protected areas

Populations of threatened plants are often located within protected areas but are still threatened because management (or lack thereof) does not address their specific conservation need. CEPF grantees will work with protected area managers to identify threats and potential solutions, and include specific actions for the preservation of endangered plants in the management plans for protected areas.

Investment Priority 4.3 Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with land owners and managers

Many threatened plant populations survive in managed landscapes, outside protected areas, and are potentially threatened by changes in land use practices. CEPF grantees will work with land users and landowners to identify threats and promote improved management practices to preserve rare plant populations.

Strategic Direction 5. Strengthen the regional conservation community through the sharing of best practices and knowledge among grantees across the hotspot

Main focus, justification and impact

With the first four strategic directions focusing on conservation actions within countries, there is a need to facilitate regional-level interactions, to share lessons learned and good practice approaches developed by grantees, and to establish connections among CSOs around the Mediterranean Basin. Such interventions are expected to contribute to the development of a regional community of conservation organizations that can provide mutual support to its members beyond the end of the CEPF investment phase.

There are many initiatives in the hotspot concerned with biological sciences, environment and sustainability, resulting in a large number of conferences and meetings, publications, on-line networking, webinars and other opportunities to share and learn. Participation of grassroots organizations in these events is often passive or limited, however, due to various barriers, including lack of information on available opportunities, lack of funding to attend meetings, and limited familiarity with the issues and approaches being discussed. Faced with these barriers, local CSOs that do attend meetings may lack the confidence or skills to effectively engage, and so fail to benefit or to put across their ideas.

Grant making under this strategic direction, which will comprise a relatively small proportion of the overall budget, will enable the RIT to work with grantees to identify opportunities for organizing dedicated regional events and to allow grantees to participate in events organized by other organizations. In addition to funding, the RIT will work with grantees to ensure that they are prepared for participation in events, and can maximize the benefit they get out of them. This strategic direction will complement activities to facilitate exchange of experience and capacity building activities, which will be built into each grant as far as possible.

Investment Priority 5.1 Support regional and thematically focused learning processes for CSOs and stakeholders

This investment priority provides opportunities to work with groups of grantees across sub-regions or the hotspot to identify themes for events on shared learning. Potential themes include management of coastal KBAs and freshwater KBAs, working with traditional resource management, and conservation of plants. It will be important to link these to existing initiatives, either by adding capacity building elements to existing conferences or by inviting relevant stakeholders to share their expertise. Themes might also focus on working with communities, engaging with government or the private sector. Hosting events at grantees' field sites would create opportunities for learning for the host organization as well as the invited participants.

Investment Priority 5.2 Support grantees to understand and engage with international conventions and processes

Funding under this investment priority will allow CEPF to support grantees to engage with international and regional processes, including meetings of international conventions and associated national processes (e.g., CBD, Natura 2000, SDGs, UNFCCC, etc.), important conferences or other venues where their participation would create both an opportunity to learn, and an opportunity to impact on decisions affecting conservation in their countries. There are a number of regional processes and conventions and processes (e.g., the Barcelona Convention, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the MedPAN network, etc.) that are important for driving political processes but which local civil society often has difficulty participating in. Projects

under this investment priority could assist CSOs to understand these mechanisms, and identify and take advantage of opportunities provided by them.

Strategic Direction 6. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a Regional Implementation Team

Main focus, justification and impact

An independent evaluation of the global CEPF program found that RITs are particularly effective at linking together the elements of comprehensive, vertically integrated portfolios, such as large anchor projects, smaller grassroots activities, policy initiatives, governmental collaboration and sustainable financing. The responsibilities of these teams have been standardized to capture the most important aspects of their functions.

In every hotspot where it invests, CEPF supports an RIT to convert the plans in the ecosystem profile into a cohesive portfolio of grants that exceeds in impact the sum of its parts. Each RIT consists of one or more CSOs active in the hotspot. An RIT could be a consortium of CSOs or a single lead organization that engages local experts in overseeing implementation of the investment strategy, such as through an advisory committee.

Investment Priority 6.1 Build a constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile

CEPF will select and support an RIT to provide strategic leadership and local knowledge to build a broad constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries towards achieving the conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile. Given the size and the complexity of the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, and considering the strategic lines proposed before, where mainstreaming conservation into development and promoting participation of a wider group of partners is going to be required, the RIT will play a crucial role supporting the consolidation of basin-wide networks and identifying regional funding opportunities to leverage and complement CEPF's investment.

Investment Priority 6.2 Act as a liaison unit for relevant networks throughout the Mediterranean to harmonize investments and direct new funding to priority issues and sites

The Mediterranean Basin is unique within the CEPF global portfolio in that there are a large number of countries ineligible for CEPF support, and, at the same time, there are substantial funding opportunities from multinational, national, private and public funding sources within these countries, some of which already make a significant contribution to funding the activities of civil society. The RIT will act as a hub, liaising between existing networks such as the Barcelona, Bonn and Ramsar Conventions, as well as Plan Bleu.

14. SUSTAINABILITY

The profile addresses sustainability in four ways:

Integrated, multi-stakeholder approaches: facilitating partnerships between civil society, governments and the corporate sector is key for sustaining action at sites where projects are funded.

CSO capacity development: enabling local CSOS to become more effective, better at planning, managing and raising funds for their actions

Aligning CEPF funding with other sources of support: CEPF funding fills funding gaps and complements larger funding support from multilateral and bilateral sources to government agencies in the region. Working through the CEPF Advisory Committee and partners such as MAVA and Prince Albert II Foundation allowed optimization of CEPF and other donor funds, including co-funding of CEPF grants by other donors.

Broadening the role of the RIT: the RIT's role contributes to sustainability through delivery of effective grant management, associated capacity building, making linkages to Government and private sector entities, promoting recognition of the role of CSOs in society, and working with partners on long term, innovative financing mechanisms.