

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund**  
No Objection Approval Pursuant to Section 4.1 of the Operational Manual

17 April 2024

**Revised Spending Authority for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot**

**1. Recommended Action Item**

The Donor Council is asked **to approve on a no-objection basis** an increase in the spending authority for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot of \$440,000 to include additional funding made available by the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation.

The total spending authority for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot will become \$14,520,000.

The deadline for no-objection approval is 1 May 2024.

**2. Background**

On 7 May 2017, the Donor Council approved, by no-objection (CEPF/DC/electronic/45), the ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot, with a spending authority of \$10 million.

On 24 July 2019, Fondation MAVA provided a grant to CEPF in support of the small grant mechanism in the Balkans sub-region. An increase to the spending authority for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot of \$578,000 was subsequently approved by the Donor Council on 31 October 2019, by no-objection (CEPF/DC/electronic/63), with the spending authority raised to \$10,578,000.

On 29 October 2020, Fondation MAVA provided a second grant to CEPF in support of the program in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. An increase to the spending authority for the hotspot of \$1,985,000 was subsequently approved by the Donor Council on 22 December 2020, by no-objection (CEPF/DC/electronic/69), with the spending authority raised to \$12,563,000.

On 30 September 2022, the Donor Council approved by no-objection (CEPF/DC/electronic/81) an increase in the spending authority for the hotspot to \$13,784,048, to incorporate funds pledged by the MAVA Foundation (€500,000, equivalent to \$498,435) and the Sigrid Rausing Trust (£283,630, equivalent to \$322,613), plus deobligated funds from the CEPF portfolio in the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot (\$400,000).

On 2 February 2023, the Donor Council approved a fourth increase to the spending authority for the hotspot, to incorporate additional funds pledged by Fondation Audemars-

Watkins (CHF 320,000, equivalent to \$348,565) and the Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems (DIMFE; €250,000, equivalent to \$270,000), and to account for the withdrawal of the pledge by the Sigrid Rausing Trust (£283,630, equivalent to \$322,613). These changes were approved by no-objection (CEPF/DC/electronic/84), with the spending authority raised to \$14,080,000.

On 18 January 2024, the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation awarded a grant of \$15.1 million to CEPF for a project titled "Conserve two biodiversity hotspots (Mediterranean Basin and Guinean Forest of West Africa) by engaging and supporting organizational development of Civil Society". The Donor Council was notified of this funding at its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting on 15 February 2024 (CEPF/DC42/4). The funding from the Hans Wilsdorf includes \$550,000 in support of the current phase of CEPF investment in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot (including on-going support to civil society organizations to address priority needs and continuing support to the Regional Implementation Team (RIT)), of which \$440,000 is available for grant making. To deploy these additional funds requires an increase in the spending authority from \$14,080,000 to \$14,520,000.

### **3. Next steps**

The Secretariat is working in close collaboration with the RIT and consultants to update the ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. The updated profile will be presented to the Donor Council for approval in the first half of 2025, in preparation for a new phase of investment. Part of the funding for this new phase has already been secured from the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation; the Secretariat is actively seeking additional sources of funding to enable a full reinvestment. The increase in spending authority will allow the award of additional CEPF grants to sustain critical activities by civil society during the "bridge" period before the start of the new phase.