



## **Mediterranean Basin Hotspot**

### **Annual Portfolio Overview**

**2013**

**(covering period from inception (June 2012) to December 2013)**

## I. Introduction

The Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspot is the second largest hotspot in the world and the largest of the world's five Mediterranean-climate regions. The hotspot covers more than 2 million square kilometers and stretches west to east from Portugal to Jordan and north to south from northern Italy to Cape Verde.

It is the third richest hotspot in the world in terms of its plant diversity (Mittermeier et al. 2004). Approximately 30,000 plant species occur, and more than 13,000 species are found nowhere else, or endemic, to the hotspot; yet, many more are being discovered every year (Plantlife International 2010, unpublished report).

Rivaling the natural diversity in the hotspot, the cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity of the region is spectacular. The region contains some of the world's first and greatest civilizations, and is the birthplace of three large monotheist religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Many of the ecosystems reached an equilibrium long ago with human activity dominating the landscapes. However, this delicate balance is in a precarious state as many local communities depend on remaining habitats for fresh water, food and a variety of other ecosystem services. The hotspot is also one of the most popular tourism destinations of the world, with 32 percent of the world's tourists (220 million per year) visiting the hotspot (Plan Bleu 2006). Species populations in the hotspot have become increasingly fragmented and isolated as a result of infrastructural development mainly triggered by the tourism industry. The pressure on scarce water resources resulting from major water investments as well as climate change has recently become the most important pressure on nature. The increasing number and magnitude of water investments has caused irreversible damage to the fragile water cycle of small rivers basins in the hotspot. CEPF investment in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot is essential to stem the threats, balance economic development with the needs of natural areas, and conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services in this vast region.

## II. Niche and Strategy for CEPF Investment

CEPF's niche is to work with all actors engaged in conservation and development activities in Mediterranean Basin countries to foster partnerships in priority corridors and sites. Such partnerships will seek to reduce impacts of these developments on natural resources and systems that the large communities are dependent on. In addition, opportunities to increase the benefits and reduce upland shifts in land use by the communities within these landscapes will be explored.

The importance of supporting civil society has been reinforced with the important political changes which has happened in several countries of the region from 2010, after completion of the Ecosystem Profile, and collectively known as the “Arab Spring”. These political changes have in some case led the way to a nescent civil society, eager to engage in environmental protection and development, but often lacking capacities to engage efficiently in preserving the natural wealth of their countries.

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

## 1) CEPF Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities

| STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS  | INVESTMENT PRIORITIES  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Promote civil society involvement in Integrated Coastal Zone Management to minimize the negative effects of coastal development in three priority corridors (Southwest Balkans; Cyrenaican Peninsula; and Mountains, Plateaus and Wetlands of Algerian Tell and Tunisia), and in 20 coastal and marine priority key biodiversity areas in other corridors</p> | <p>1.1 Support civil society involvement in the development and implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and the advancement of best practices in integrating nature conservation with the tourism sector</p> <p>1.2 Raise awareness and influence the choices of the European tourist market and tourism businesses in favor of tourism practices appropriate for nature</p> <p>1.3 Support local stakeholders to advance and benefit from nature-based tourism through the diversification of tourism-related activities and generation of alternative livelihoods</p>  |
| <p>2. Establish the sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources with a focus on the priority corridors of the (1) Atlas Mountains, (2) Taurus Mountains, (3) Orontes Valley and Lebanon Mountains and (4) Southwest Balkans</p>  | <p>2.1. Contribute to and establish Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) initiatives for pilot basins and replicate best practices, to reduce the negative impacts of insufficiently planned water infrastructures</p> <p>2.2. Support IRBM policy and legislation development and implementation through capacity building and advocacy at all appropriate levels</p> <p>2.3. Support innovative financing mechanisms for conserving and restoring freshwater ecosystems and traditional water catchments</p> <p>2.4. Facilitate and support adaptation to climate change via improving water use efficiency in agricultural landscapes and allowing environmental flows for key biodiversity areas</p> <p>2.5 Share and replicate the lessons learned and best practices from and with other river basin management experiences elsewhere in the Mediterranean</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>3. Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas</p>                              | <p>3.1. Establish new protected areas and promote improved management of existing protected areas by developing and implementing sustainable management plans</p> <p>3.2. Develop financial mechanisms that support protected areas while enhancing sustainable livelihood and promoting community management of priority key biodiversity areas</p> <p>3.3. Raise awareness of the importance of priority key biodiversity areas, including those that have irreplaceable plant and marine biodiversity</p> |
| <p>4. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a regional implementation team</p> | <p>4.1. Build a broad constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem</p> <p>4.2. Act as a liaison unit for relevant networks throughout the Mediterranean to harmonize investments and direct new funding to priority issues and sites.</p>  |

Through these four strategic directions, CEPF will help to reduce the negative impacts of the tourism industry before it becomes as problematic for the southern and eastern Mediterranean as it has been for the north. This will be complemented by supporting the wise use of one of the scarcest resources in the hotspot, namely, water. CEPF will address the ecological and economic aspects of water consumption primarily at the water basin scale, but also at local and national scales, if appropriate. Some key biodiversity areas within the hotspot will certainly require more in-depth attention due to their high irreplaceability and vulnerability. CEPF will address this via supporting the enhancement of the existing protected areas network. Most of the actions will be targeted to six priority corridors and 70 key biodiversity areas. The total allocation for the portfolio is US\$ 10 million for five years.

## 2) Eligible Countries and Status of GEF Focal Point Endorsements

| Potentially Eligible Countries | Endorsement Date | Eligible for CEPF Funding in 2013 | Comments  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Albania                        | 2011             | Yes                               |   |
| Algeria                        | November 2013    | Yes                               | Became eligible only in 2013 and was not included in first Calls for Proposals  |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina           | June 2011        | Yes                               |   |
| Cape Verde                     | December 2011    | Yes                               |   |
| Croatia                        | December 2011    | Yes                               |   |
| Egypt                          | -                | No                                | Focal point has been contacted at several occasions but no endorsement secured. Political and security situation in 2010-2013 also a concern for potential investments. |
| Jordan                         | October 2011     | Yes                               |   |
| Lebanon                        | January 2012     | Yes                               |   |
| Libya                          | October 2012     | Yes                               | Became eligible at the end of 2012 and was not included in first Calls for Proposals  |
| Macedonia                      | September 2010   | Yes                               |   |
| Montenegro                     | October 2010     | Yes                               |   |
| Morocco                        | April 2012       | Yes                               |   |
| Syria                          | 2011             | Yes                               | GEF focal point endorsement received but investments impossible due to political and security reasons.  |
| Tunisia                        | 2011             | Yes                               |   |
| Turkey                         | -                | No.                               | Formal GEF focal point endorsement has not been secured in spite of several exchanges with Turkish authorities in 2010-2012, therefore preventing CEPF investment.      |

### III. The Regional Implementation Team

The Regional Implementation Team (RIT) was recruited after a competitive process that took place in 2011-2012. The contracting period for the regional implementation team had been particularly lengthy in the Mediterranean for several reasons. The first lies in the complexity of the Hotspot – with a planned investment in 15 countries at the time - which was the first of its kind for CEPF. This implied the need to secure a total amount higher to the usual one million threshold for CEPF, requiring a change in CEPF policies to be approved by Donors. The second reason lies in the cancellation of the first call and the need to launch the process again in early 2012. The first selected organization was Doga Dernegi, the Turkish BirdLife partner; but as GEF Focal Point endorsement could not be secured, the option of a Turkey-based operator became problematic. As a result, the contract with actual RIT only happened in June 2012, with about a year delay from the initial planning.

The Regional Implementation Team is a consortium of member organizations of the BirdLife Partnership, led by BirdLife International. The other partners are:

- La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO – BirdLife in France), in charge of North Africa (except Egypt) and Cape Verde,
- DOPPS (BirdLife in Slovenia), in charge of the Balkans
- And BirdLife Middle-East Office, in charge of the Middle-East countries and Egypt.

*Regional Implementation Team:*

- RIT Manager, Liz Smith (Cambridge Secretariat)
- Programme Leader, Mohammed Yousef (Middle East regional office)
- Programme Officer Middle East, Sharif Jbour (Middle East regional office)
- Programme Officer Balkans, Borut Rubinic (DOPPS)
- Programme Officer North Africa, Awatef Abiadh (LPO)
- Programme Assistant, Zoya Shehadeh (Middle East regional office)

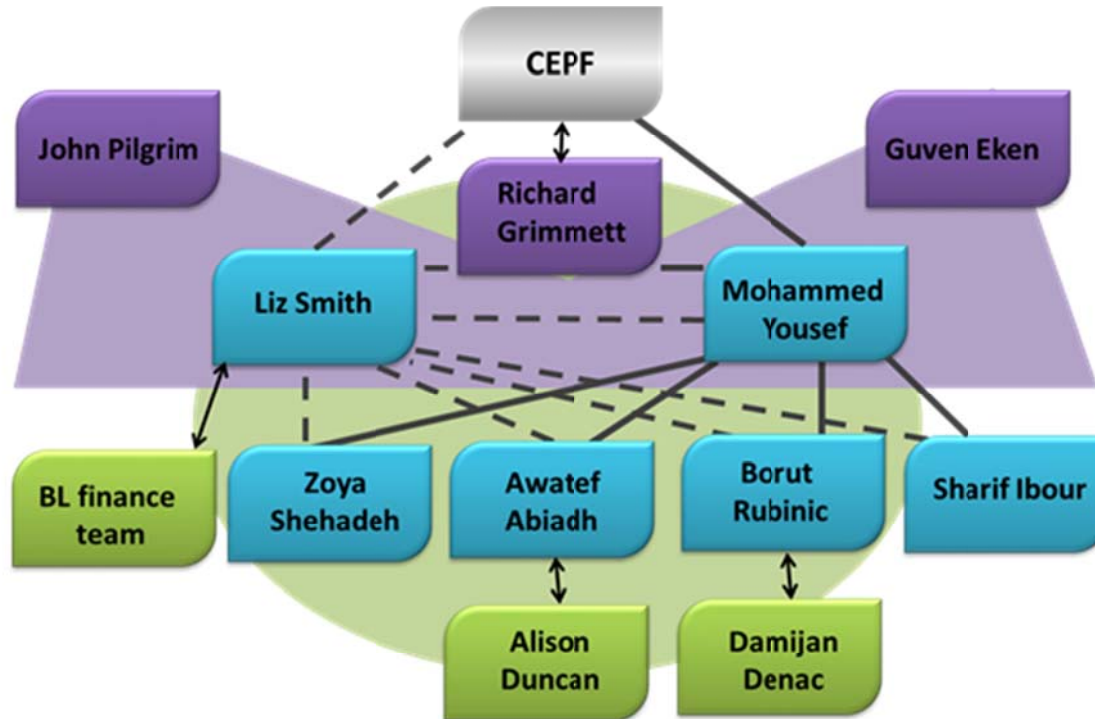
*Key people aiding the RIT:*

- BirdLife International Secretariat: Richard Grimmett
- Middle East Office Regional Director: Ibrahim Khader



RIT Programme Officers. From left to right: Awatef Abiadh (North Africa), Borut Rubinic (Balkans), Sharif Jbour (Middle-East)

- Senior Programme Advisor: Guven Eken
- Implementation Advisor: John Pilgrim
- LPO: Alison Duncan
- DOPPS: Damijan Denac
- Finance Team: Adriana Gawrysiak, Michael Lewis, Tracy Spraggon
- Communications Team: Ade Long, Shaun Hurrell





## IV. Calls for Proposals in 2012-2013

In 2012-2013, CEPF launched five Calls for Proposals (one is pending at the time of report), receiving a total of 166 Letters of Intent for Large Grants and 109 for Small Grants. The details of these calls are presented in the Table below.

| Release   | Deadline  | Specifications  | Countries  | LoIs received    | Approved                         |
|-----------|-----------|---|--|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Jan. 2012 | Feb. 2012 | Large Grants, All SDs<br>(Focus on regional projects) | Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Tunisia         | 40               | 6 (15%)                          |
| Oct. 2012 | Nov. 2012 | Large Grants, All SDs                                 | Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Croatia, Jordan, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Libya, Macedonia and Tunisia | 77               | 19 (25%)                         |
| Nov. 2012 | Dec 2012  | Small Grants, All SDs                                 | (Idem)   | 97               | 19 (20%)                         |
| Jan 2013  | Feb 2013  | Large Grants, All SDs                                 | Algeria, Libya   | 15               | 1 (7%)                           |
| Jun. 2013 | Jul. 2013 | SD 2<br>Large and Small Grants                        | Albania, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Macedonia   | LG: 34<br>SG: 12 | LG: 7 (21%)<br>SG: 3 (25%)       |
| Nov. 2013 | Jan 2014  | Small Grants<br>All SDs                               | Albania, Algeria, Jordan, Libya, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Morocco, and Tunisia                         | 43               | 1 active<br>12 pipeline<br>(30%) |

Notes: 1 small grant (the first one in 2012) was made outside of a CFP for the Skadar Lake workshop (Green Home)  
2 small grants were created outside of a CFP as a result of the February 2013 Libya/Algeria Large grant CFP (ECOSTAQ, SKIKDA)

Out of the 166 Letter of Intent received for Large Grants, about 38 were moved to second stage to request a full proposal, and 33 (20%) were approved for granting. Out of the 109 Letters of Intent received for Small Grants, 23 were approved and 12 in the pipeline as of December 31, 2013 (32% of approval).

Overall, the quality of the applications varies significantly across the region. Applications from the Balkans – and in particular from the countries of the former Yugoslavian Republic - are generally of good quality, in contrast with applications from North Africa. This could be considered as an indicator of the overall capacity of civil society, with organizations in North Africa being often younger, with less experience of project preparation. But the situation faced by organizations and individuals in times of political turmoil, in particular in Libya and Tunisia also certainly impacted the ability to develop proposals. As a consequence, the award of grants between the sub-regions also varied (see following section), calling for a strengthened effort in terms of reaching out and closely support NGOs in countries where capacity needs are more important.

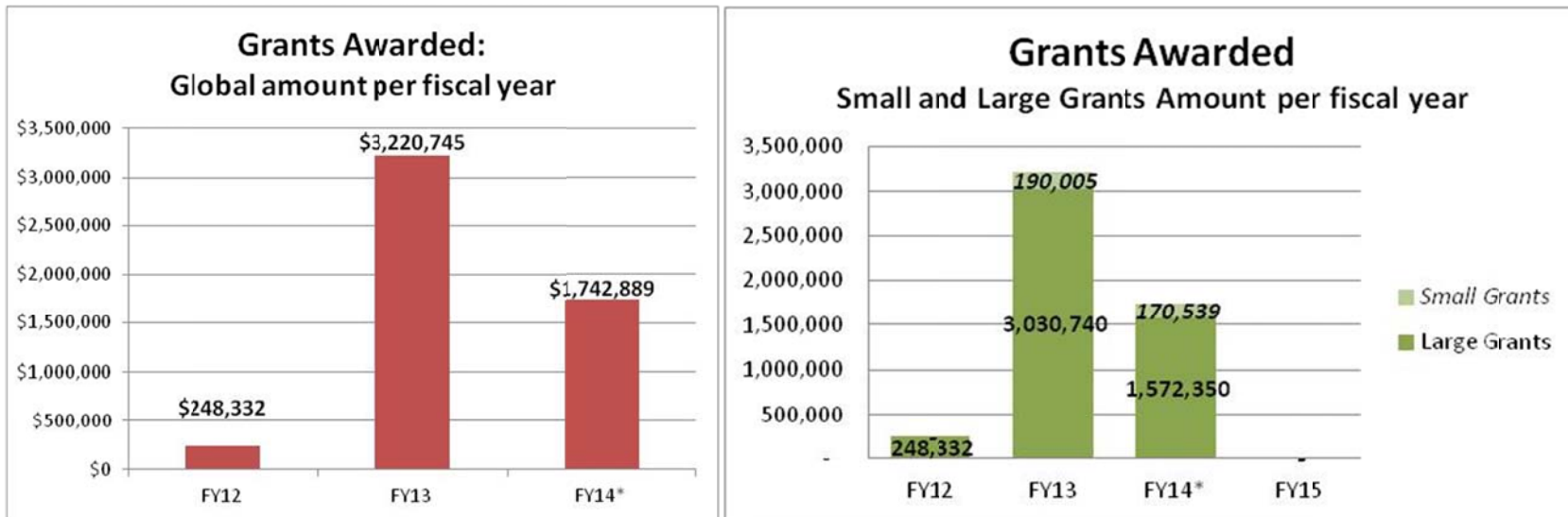
## V. Overview of the Portfolio as of December 2013

The following Tables present the situation of projects that were active or completed as of 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2013. They do not include the grants for the Regional Implementation Team. Grants contracted in 2013 but with a start date in 2014 are not included either.

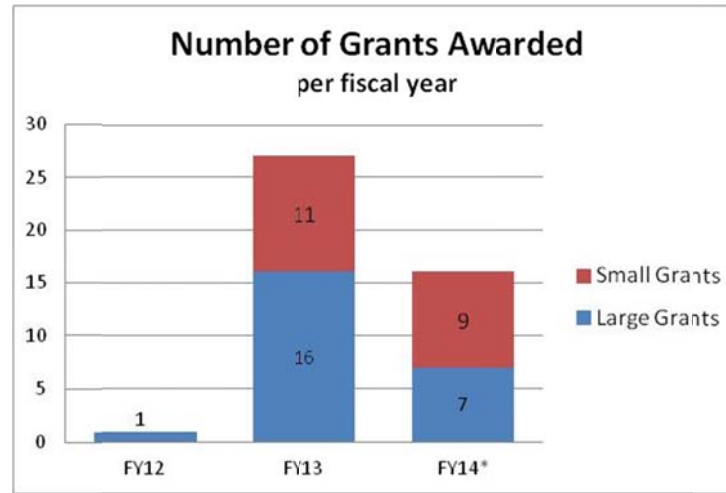
### 1) Financial Data

The first eighteen months of implementation have been marked by an important granting effort. Overall, 44 grants were awarded (24 Large grants and 20 Small grants) for a global amount of USD 5,211,966 (USD 4,851,422 for Large grants, USD 360,544 for Small grants).

It is usual that granting of small grants is significantly delayed compare to large grants – as the Regional Implementation Team has to develop their granting mechanisms and system first; in this context, the Mediterranean hotspot RIT performed well with 20 small grants awarded one year after they were contracted.

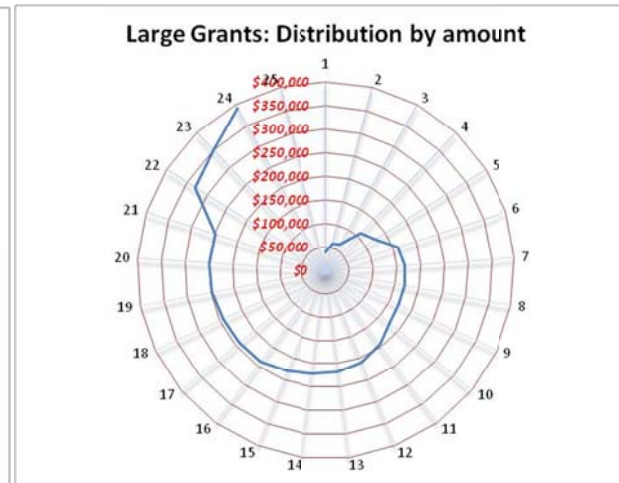
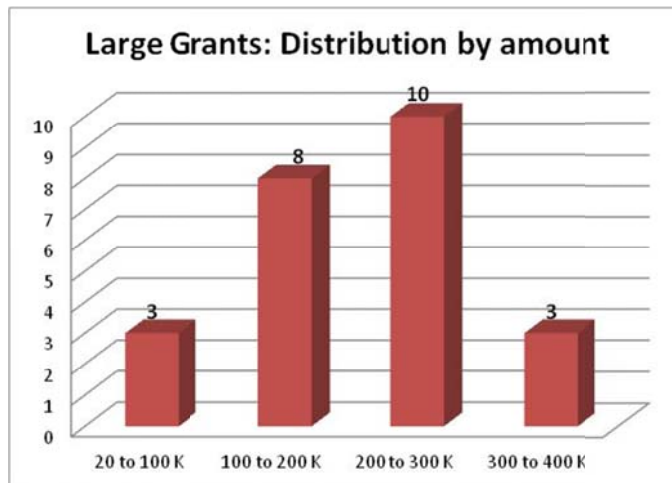


\*FY14: figures from July to December 2013 only.



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This first granting period is also characterized by a number of important large grants, with an average size of Large grants at USD 202,000, and 13 grants with budgets over USD 200,000 awarded mostly to international organizations. This is an usual situation for the first granting period of large, multi-countries Hotspots. These Large grants are mostly “core” projects, working at the regional level (from three or four countries to 11 countries) and therefore requiring significant budgets. They nevertheless include in most case sub-grants to national organizations (see details of grants in Annex).

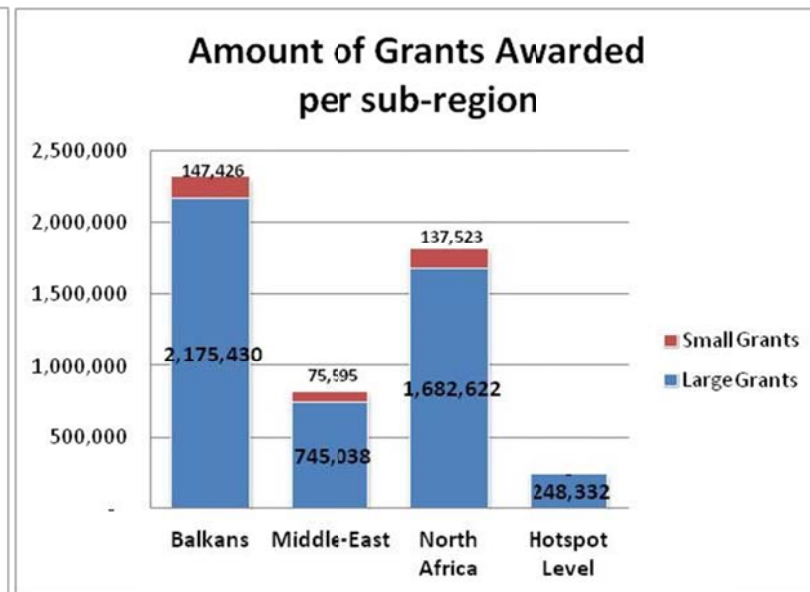
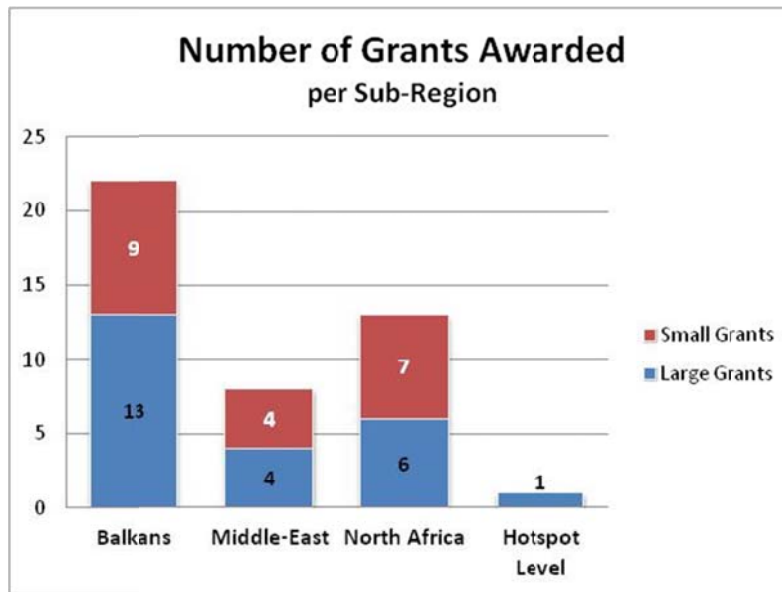
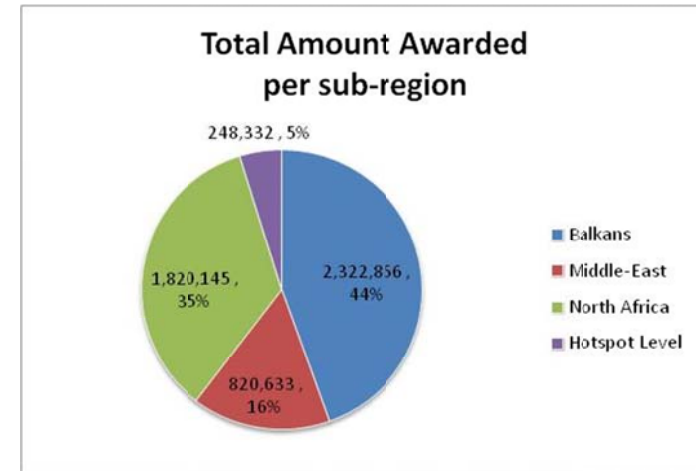


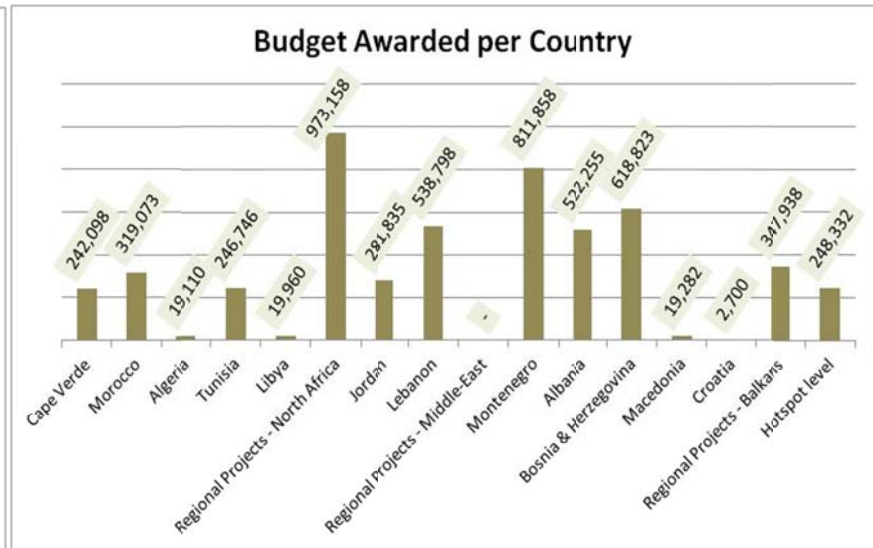
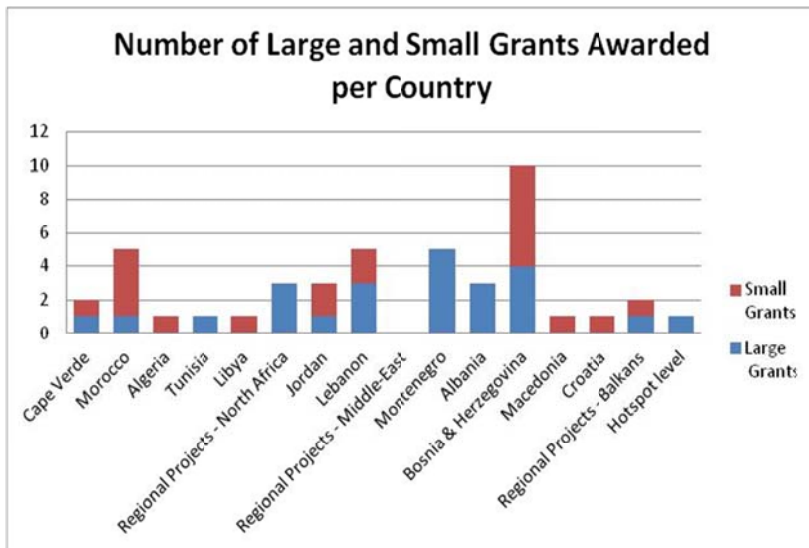
## 2) Investment by Regions and Countries

The level of granting in the first 18 months of implementation is significantly higher in the Balkans. If this could be partly considered to be a reflection of the difference in the capacities of civil society, two other factors have to be taken into account:

- the fact that Libya and Algeria became eligible only in 2013 and
- the political situation in Tunisia and Libya which has been challenging at some point – and still is in Libya.

The level of granting in the Middle-East is at the level expected, considering the limited number of eligible sites and the impossibility to support Syrian organizations due to the events.



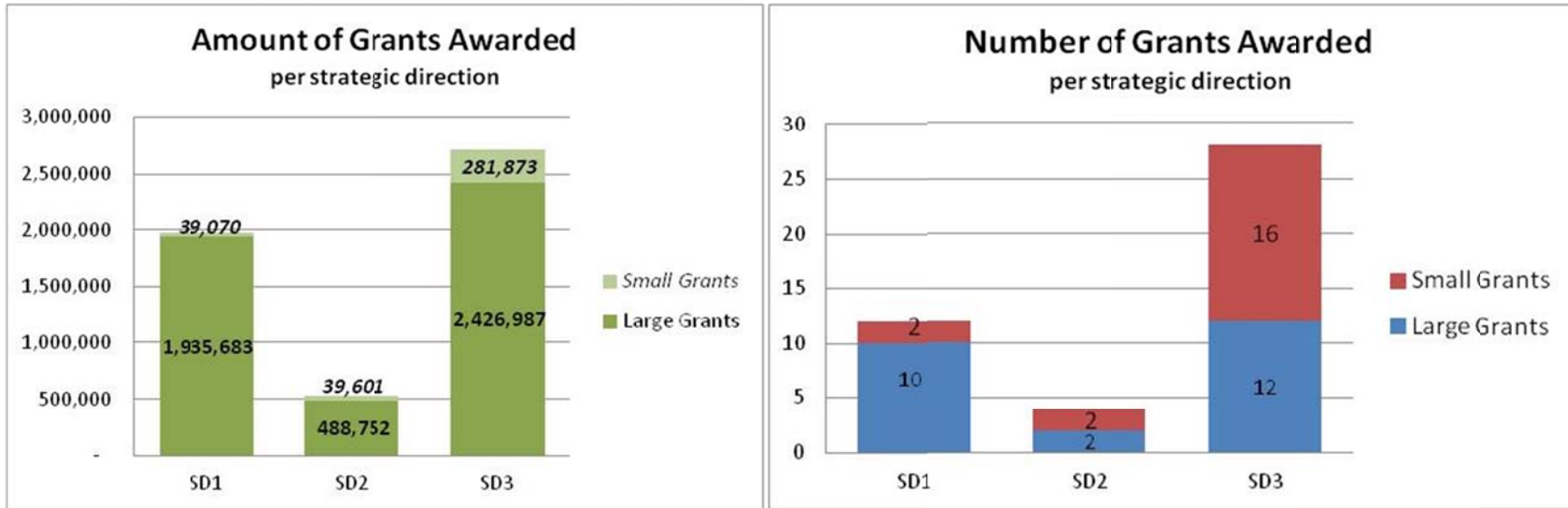


The North Africa region is characterized so far by the predominance of Regional Projects, which account for USD 973,158 – or about 60% of the budget invested in this part of the hotspot. Most of these projects have national activities, implemented in partnership with national sub-grantee organizations.

In the Balkans, Montenegro appears as the country which has so far benefitted most from CEPF funding, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina – which definitely leads the entire hotspot for the dynamism of the civil society to get small grants – with 6 small grants awarded in only a year, for a total amount of USD 106,000. Most of the small projects supported in this country work in very closely with each other and are already getting interesting results (see below).

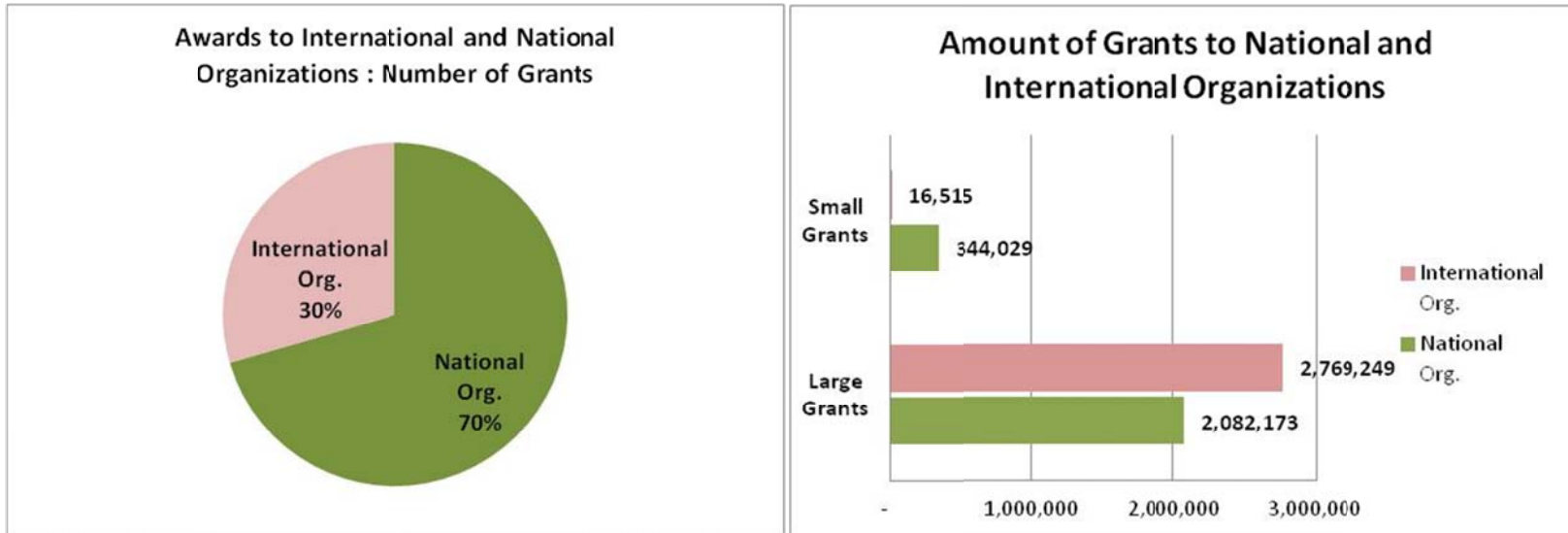
One small grant was awarded in Croatia, for USD 2,700. This will be the first and only CEPF investment in this country under current regulations, as Croatia became a European Union member in July 2013, therefore becoming eligible to CEPF funding.

### 3) Breakdown by Strategic Directions



The first Calls for Proposals in the Hotspot were open for proposal under any of the Strategic Directions. Without surprise, a larger number of applications were received for the Strategic Direction 3 which relates more strictly with traditional biodiversity conservation activities (establishment and management of protected areas...) and is more appealing to the conservation organizations with which CEPF has stronger contacts. The topics of integrated coastal zone management and river basin management are more difficult to deal with for many organizations and will need a specific attention during the coming years.

#### 4) CEPF support to Local vs. International organizations



As of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2013, CEPF has awarded 31 grants to national organizations (19 Small grants, 12 Large grants) and 13 to International NGOs. Yet, as the large regional grants have been mostly awarded to International NGOs, this last group represents 53% of the amount awarded by CEPF in the region – even if this does not take into account the re-granting to national organizations within these large projects.

The ratio of support to national organizations is very satisfying for an inception phase in a large, multi-country hotspot – where it is not uncommon to need time to reach out and support local organizations. Yet, additional efforts are needed to support national NGOs to access to large grants, in particular in North Africa.

## VI. Performance Assessment

The RIT and CEPF Secretariat devoted much of the first 18 months of implementation to laying a firm foundation for grant making. The team invested a significant amount of effort in stakeholder outreach and awareness building, development of grant-making review and assistance processes, working closely with applicants to prepare their proposals. This effort has resulted in granting 44 grants for over USD 5 millions, in 12 countries.

One of the important achievements of the team during this period has been the creation of alliances and enhanced cooperation between civil society organizations. A great example of such alliance-building activity has taken place on the Lake Skadar KBA, on the Montenegro-Albania border. This KBA had already received a lot of support from the international community in the past (European Union funding, GEF...) ; when CEPF launched the first call for proposals, five proposals were submitted for this KBA, largely overlapping and in any case uncoordinated. Confronted with this situation, CEPF awarded a Small grant to a local Montenegrin organization, *Green Home*, to set up a workshop with the objective of harmonizing the approaches for the conservation of the site. This led to a clarification of the roles of the organizations, and preparation of two joint proposals involving most of the local organizations and institutions through subgrants (one with *Noé Conservation* and the other with *IUCN*), which have already provided good conservation results. Another example is the grant awarded to *Tour du Valat* to support local groups in four North African countries for water monitoring and engagement in wetland management, paving the way for a future network of North African organizations on wetlands.

The team has paid a strong attention to reaching out to local civil society organizations. This has been reflected in the large number (20) of Small grants, all but one awarded to national organizations. Also all the four Large grants in the Middle-East, and two-third of the ones in the Balkans have been awarded to national NGOs. In North Africa only two of the six Large grants have been awarded to national organizations. One of the objective of the team will be to strengthen reaching-out efforts in this part of the hotspot to extend support to local organizations. This will be paired with specific efforts towards Libya and Algeria which has become eligible for CEPF funding more recently.

Overall, the area of performance with the greatest room for improvement remains in setting up a stronger platform of regional experts – being it to improve the External review process for Large grants, or more generally to get input and advice on the portfolio progress, through the establishment of a Regional Advisory Committee. So far, contacts have been numerous, but on generally on a bilateral basis. This is something on which the team has already started to work and a college of experts for reviews, as well the regional advisory committee, has been set up in 2013, with the first face-to-face meeting scheduled for early 2014.



The team has also engaged with several donors with the objective of leveraging funding for the implementation of the investment strategy. This has led to the commitment of the MAVA Foundation to support the Strategic Direction 1 with an additional USD 1.11 million – that would become effective in 2014.

## VII. Portfolio Highlights by Strategic Direction

With only a few months of implementation – in the best cases – for most of the CEPF-supported projects, it is still too early to present specific results for projects, not to mention aggregated achievements for each strategic direction. The following pages will then present selected projects awarded as well as milestones achievements in a few cases. The comprehensive list of supported projects, per Strategic direction and with a summary, is provided in Appendix.

### 1) Strategic Direction 1: Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Tourism

This Strategic Direction focuses on three priority corridors: the Southwest Balkans, the Cyrenaican Peninsula in Libya and the coastal part of the Mountains, Plateau and Wetlands of Algerian tell and Tunisia. The three investment priorities could be summarized as:

- i) Involvement of civil society in ICZM processes – in particular in relation with promoting good practices in the tourism sector
- ii) Awareness raising towards the European tourism market and tourism business in favor of more biodiversity and environment-friendly practices
- iii) Support to local nature-based tourism that could deliver co-benefits for biodiversity and local economy

As of December 2013, 12 grants have been awarded under this Strategic direction. With the exception of two grants which started on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, all started in the second half of 2013. This Strategic direction is currently dominated by large grants (10 out of 12), most of them implemented in the Balkans (7 grants).

The most challenging corridor is and will be in the coming years the Cyrenaican Peninsula in Libya – where the political and security situation, combined with low capacity of the new civil society, would be limiting factors to result-leading projects. Considering that Libya became eligible only at the end of 2012 and was not included in the first calls for proposals, to have already two activities on-going (a small grant to the *Libyan Society for Birds* and a component of the *WWF* project), could already be seen as a success. These two projects have already developed informal relations and are synergistic with other CEPF-supported projects in Libya under SD3, namely with *Tour du Valat* project on waterbirds monitoring and IUCN project on protected area management – which occur in the same corridor.

One of the anchor grants under this Strategic direction is the support to *WWF-MEDPO* project SEA-Med project (Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas). This project – for which CEPF is one of several co-donors –addresses fisheries and tourism management through a stakeholder participatory approach, to demonstrate the value of MPAs for marine resources management and livelihood generation and to contribute to the creation of exemplary models of Integrated Coastal Management Zones. CEPF supports specific capacity-

building activities with local civil society organizations, implemented in Tunisia by *Living Earth Tunisia*, the WWF affiliate in the country and in Albania by *INCA*, under a separate grant. Untypical for CEPF in some ways, this grant allows CEPF to be part in a regional initiative, to capitalize on the WWF experience to inform further decision under this Strategic direction. An objective for CEPF is also to support, later in the portfolio implementation, some of the organizations which will have benefitted from capacity building activities – through large or small grants for field projects implementation.

Several grants also tackle the investment priority 1.1 in the Balkans – in particular in the South-East of Montenegro with grants to *ECNC Land & Sea Group A.E.I.E.* and the *Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development*. Nevertheless, the large majority of the grants awarded so far focus on the promotion of eco-tourism activities, under the Investment priority 1.3. This is unsurprising as national organizations are far more familiar with eco-tourism and far more confident to develop smaller, site-based activities with local stakeholders. Involvement in larger scale ICZM processes requires more capacities and a knowledge that is not commonly found among national organizations – all the more in the context of the “new” civil society emerging in North Africa. A gradual approach will be necessary to achieve CEPF’s objective under this investment priority – including mapping the existing ICZM processes, documenting past and on-going experiences, and support specific capacity-building or even mentoring programmes - potentially involving organizations from beyond the eligible countries or even the hotspot. Similarly, no proposal has been received so far under the investment priority 1.2, which would require additional effort from the team to reach out to organizations with experience in working with private sector.

#### **Strategic Direction 1: Highlights to date**

Cape Verde hosts the third largest population of Loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in the world. After 2 year of monitoring their nesting sites and collecting data about nesting conditions, *Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves* and their local partner *Biosfera I* proposed to prepare a draft conservation plan for this endangered species in Cape Verde. The conservation plan suggests a monitoring plan including appropriate restrictions on and recommendation for the management of eco-tourism activities such as turtle-watching. The partners have also started initial research to set up an eradication plan of invasive species on Santa Luzia. These steps are primordial to develop a management plan for activities on this site, one of the most important for biodiversity in the country. The organizations are working closely with fishermen associations to ensure full participation during the project timeline as well as for the implementation of the future biosafety plan.



Birdwatching on Tunis Lake with AAO (Photo P.Carret)

In Tunisia, *Association des Amis des Oiseaux* (AAO) has partnered with 4 local organizations to develop an eco-tourist trail linking 5 key biodiversity areas in the Cap Bon peninsula. Local organizations have recruited and are training 5 birdwatching guides from local community. The local organizations have started to work on developing support groups for each site, involving local communities and relevant stakeholders. One of the important challenges after the revolution in Tunisia was the spread of litter around wetlands and this is a major obstacle of the ecotourism in these sites. In partnership with Agence de Protection et d'Aménagement de Littoral and other local NGOs, CEPF grantees started a clean-up campaign in each site. AAO have started to communicate the importance of these sites to the nearby hotels and to propose itineraries for the summer season in order to introduce the ecotourism tradition to hotels.

In Montenegro, the *Center for Protection and Study of Birds* (CZIP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ulcinj saline operator to jointly develop eco-touristic activities and promote the site (where more than 10 million birds pass during migration) as a prime bird-watching destination. Five local students have been engaged and trained as eco-tour guides, the eco-museum is being renovated, a souvenir shop has been built and bird-watching infrastructure – hiking trails and observation hides and towers –repaired and made accessible. Although the situation remains difficult as the salt-production company that operates the site is in the process of bankruptcy, visitors are starting to visit the saline to enjoy the bounty of birdlife, among others flamingoes, pelicans and great variety of other waterbirds. CZIP hopes that the number of visitors will be sufficient to show the alternative livelihoods can be provided through eco-touristic activities as supporting economy of the salt production.

## 2) Strategic Direction 2. Sustainable Management of Water Resources and Wise Use of Water

In absence of the GEF Focal point endorsement in Turkey, this Strategic direction is limited to three priority corridors:

- i) The Southwest Balkans
- ii) The Atlas Mountains of Morocco
- iii) The Lebanese Mountains (the Syrian and Turkish portion of the larger corridor being ineligible for the time being).

Similarly to the situation regarding SD1, the Strategic Direction 2 has been largely under-utilized by civil society organizations of the hotspot, and very few proposals have been received, either for Large or Small grants. At present time, only two projects are on-going: one large project with *Association Marocaine pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature*, whose objective is to develop nature-based tourism and sustainable fishing activities to support the sustainable use and restoration of freshwater ecosystems in the Atlas mountains. The other one is a small grant to *Association des Enseignants des Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre au Maroc* (AVEST) to develop and promote good agricultural practices to protect the ecological integrity of the Oued Boufekrane river, also in Morocco. Several other projects are nevertheless in the pipeline in Southwest Balkans.

Additional attention will be required on this Strategic direction in the coming years, and a gradual approach, similar to the one envisaged for SD1, might be necessary to reach the expected impacts.

### Strategic Direction 2: Highlights to date

The very first CEPF-funded project in the Mediterranean Basin was granted under this Strategic direction: it is an anchor grant to *IUCN* for freshwater biodiversity assessment and identification of conservation priorities, an important activity to raise the awareness on the importance of freshwater biodiversity, and to build a scientific basis for future Integrated River Basin Management. Through identification of new Key Biodiversity Areas, this project also contributes to the Strategic direction 3. As of December 2013, the project has reviewed, collated and assessed against the Red List™ criteria 650 freshwater species in the Middle-East part of the Hotspot, and shared the information with governments, local governments and the scientific community. In the Balkans, New FW KBA sites have been identified for the Balkans region - this has in particular helped strengthen work in Croatia to develop its Natura2000 network on becoming an EU member state (in July 2013). Current and proposed conservation actions have been identified for all FW KBAs of the Balkans in support of on-the-ground conservation actions. Consideration for impacts of water resource planning have been highlighted in both information on threats at FW KBAs in the Balkans and as threat to individual species as part of the Red Listing of species in west Asia.

In Morocco, *l'Association Marocaine pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature* (AMEPN) has prepared an education program related to water resource conservation in Ifrane National Park and Oriental Atlas National Park. An agreement has been signed between the NGO and the

Provincial delegation of the Education ministry to implement the educational plan in the schools of the area. The project is valuing water biodiversity resources through the execution of an eco-tourism trail involving fishermen. The AMEPN is building capacity of the fishermen's federation through training on sustainable fishing. A center for the promotion of good fishing and water management practices is under construction in one of the old houses of the Forest Department. The project is a good opportunity to develop a partnership between AMEPN, fishermen federation and the relevant stakeholders in the region.

### 3) Strategic Direction 3. Improve Conservation Status of Priority KBAs

This Strategic has unsurprisingly been the most popular of all in these first 18 months of implementation, and 30 grants (13 Large and 17 Small) have been awarded for a total amount of USD 2,976,892.

The large majority of the grants have been awarded under the Investment priority 3.1 – promotion of new protected areas and improvement of the management of existing ones. Initially, 40 KBAs had been identified as priority KBAs for this Strategic Direction, but this number is effectively reduced to 27 in the context of ineligibility of Turkey and impossibility to invest in Syria (in fact, biodiversity wise, we could even consider 25 sites, as two are transboundary KBAs: Lake Skadar and Lake Orhid in the Balkans). The 30 projects cover at present time 14 KBAs, with a very wide range of interventions. Some KBAs are hosting several projects – as in the case of the Lake Skadar – while some regional initiatives benefits to several sites – as in the case of the *IUCN* or *Tour du Valat* projects in North Africa (see below). Projects are still in early stages of implementation, and no major impact in terms of improvement of management could be noticed so far.

If the portfolio is pretty much in shape for the investment priority 3.1, no project has been identified regarding the development of sustainable funding mechanisms (IP 3.2) – which will have to be tackled in the coming years. A few small grants have also been signed under this investment priority to raise awareness about important sites for flora – a priority that was highlighted in the Ecosystem Profile. For instance, a guide to the country's wildflowers is being produced by *Arts, Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon (AUL)*, while the *Institute for Adriatic Crops and Karst Reclamation* has led several studies on wild grape (*Vitis vinifera ssp sylvestris*) for future identification of important sites for the conservation of this species in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

#### Strategic Direction 3: Highlights to date

The first two calls for proposals, in January and November 2012, have shown the interest of many organizations in working for conservation of Skadar lake, as well as the great needs on this KBA in spite of several former initiatives. In order to make sure future activities would be mutually supportive and to push for collaborations, Secretariat and RIT decided to support, through a Small grant, the organization of a workshop with all applicants. Some 15 organizations, together with 10 governmental and managing authorities met and discussed conservation priorities and possible project proposals preparation. The direct result of this event was a set of three complex project proposals, following three identified conservation priorities. Two of the three proposals were accepted making a vision of 10 non-governmental organizations that engage together to improve conservation conditions of the Lake.



Lake Skadar, at the Albania-Montenegro Border (photo A. Cermak-Terzian)

A consortium of partners, led by French-based international organization *Noe Conservation*, built up a project at Skadar lake with primary goal of conservation of Dalmatian Pelicans, the most emblematic bird species of this lake. The consortium brings together local conservation organizations from Montenegrin and Albanian sides of the lake (*CZIP* and *APAWA*), *Tour de Valat* as an ultimate authority on pelicans and wetland management, the *Natural History Museum of Montenegro*, the *National Park of Skadar lake* and *EuroNatur* (a German-based international organization with extensive experience in conservation in the Balkans). Four nesting rafts were set in December 2013 and immediately used for nesting by pelicans, raising great hope for an increase of the species population at Lake Skadar.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, CEPF saw the opportunity to involve several international and national conservation organizations to implement projects aiming at improving the conservation situation in Hutovo Blato, an internationally important Ramsar site and a priority Key Biodiversity Area. As a result, two closely related projects were funded:

- *Improving the Management of Hutovo blato Nature Park* led by *EuroNatur*, with *Hutovo blato NP*, *Lijepa naša* and *Naše ptice* NGOs as partners
- *Securing the future of Hutovo blato Nature Park* led by *WWF*, Rome office, with *Hutovo blato* and *EuroNatur* as partners

One of the ultimate goals of combined efforts of the two projects is to prevent illegal hunting in the Nature Park, which causes huge population decrease of many threatened birds, by securing a stable warden service. With support for training of the staff and management of the Nature Park. some first encouraging signs were reported during *EuroNatur* field visits in autumn/winter 2013/14. The situation in the park was reported to be much better than in October 2012, when there was severe evidence of illegal hunting in the park. This winter the disturbance has dramatically reduced, indicated by a 10 fold increase in water birds population on the lakes compare with the previous year.

In North Africa most projects under SD3 are managed by international organizations. This includes 2 large grants at the sub-regional scale covering 4 countries and 2 small grants in Morocco. The main focus here is the transfer of the savoir-faire of international organizations to national or local organizations. *Tour du Valat Foundation* leads a project on the monitoring of waterbirds, as a tool for improved management of wetlands. The organization also helps the creation of support groups for each site. A total of 8 wetlands are covered by the project, involving 4 national organizations through sub-grants and 8 local organizations. Up to now, the 8 “site support groups” are in place, composed of a local organization, with members of the local community and a governmental member. They are now receiving training to be effective in the conservation of the site. *Tour du Valat* has started to work with the supporting groups on their sustainable financial program.



In Morocco, *Moroccan Primate Conservation* (MPC) and the *Institut Scientifique de Rabat* works on the conservation of the most emblematic species in North Africa, *Macaca sylvanus*. MPC finished the cartography of the habitat fragmentation and have started to prepare a management plan to rehabilitate the area to enhance connectivity. Further South, *Global Diversity Foundation* with its partner *High Atlas Foundation* have a Small Grant with co-financing from Darwin Initiative to decrease pressure on the collection of aromatic and medicinal plants in Toubkal National Park. The preparation phase of plant nurseries was achieved and the distribution of plants to the local community will take place next September.

In the Middle East, CEPF has catalyzed partnerships amongst national civil society organizations implementing projects to conserve KBAs, through facilitating communications between grantees and supporting exchanges visits. The CEPF investment in the region has gone beyond site conservation action to include national conservation approaches. This is the case in Lebanon with the development of Important Plant Areas or the promotion of sustainable hunting practices. Identifying Important Plant Areas in Lebanon is a key national project implemented by *Université Saint-Joseph* which also aims to establish three micro-reserves at Ehmej, Sarada and Baskinta to secure the long-term survival of the sites and their species. Each of these sites harbors rare and threatened plant species and are under pressure from activities including quarrying and other unsustainable practices. Another exciting project by the *Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon* is to conserve the Anti-Lebanon Mountain KBA through a tradition local conservation approach called “Hima”. This project provides an exceptional opportunity to implement this conservation approach in a theme that addresses KBAs conservation, focusing on the degraded ecosystem and its related biodiversity hand in hand with the local communities living at this critical ecosystem.

## VIII. Collaboration with CEPF Donors

The RIT and CEPF Secretariat have worked heavily to engage with GEF Focal points in all countries, first to secure their endorsement of the Strategy, but also to up-date them on the progress of CEPF investment. The CEPF and RIT supervision missions in the countries have been used to meet personally with many of the CEPF donors' representatives. The list of these meetings is provided for in the Table below.

| Date         | Country    | Donor Agency | Persons met                               | CEPF team  | Comments  |
|--------------|------------|--------------|---|--|---|
| Feb 6, 2013  | Algeria    | GEF          | Amel Oudina                               | Awatef Abiadh                                    | Discussion about the CEPF call for proposal and Civil society organization in Algeria   |
| Feb 12, 2013 | Algeria    | EU           | Silvia Favret                             | Awatef Abiadh                                    | Presentation of CEPF activities in Algeria/ Discussion about Future EU project with Civil Society, Obstacle of implementation In Algeria with civil society organization  |
| March, 2013  | Jordan     | GEF          | GEF Focal Person                          | Nina Marshall<br>John Watkin<br>Mohammed Youssef | Presentation of CEPS Strategy and RIT, discussion about other GEF Funded projects in Jordan.  |
| Apr 24, 2013 | Montenegro | GEF          | Mr. Ando Drecun                           | Borut Rubinic                                    | Discussion about cooperation and support of GEF Focal point for actions in Montenegro. There is a will to support all the ongoing CEPF granted activities in Montenegro by concrete public and formal activities  |
| Jun 19, 2013 | Albania    | GEF          | GEF SGP Focal point in Albania            | Borut Rubinic                                    | Presentation of CEPF and discussion about possible leverage of GEF Small Grant Programme to the existing and planned CEPF funded activities in Albania. Possibilities for cooperation and co-funding through GEF SGP were identified, feedback was very realistic but generally very positive |
| Sept 9, 2013 | Morocco    | GEF          | Mohammed Benyahia                         | Awatef Abiadh<br>Mohammed Youssef                | Presentation of the implementation of the CEPF projects/possibility of exchange with the international team about the need of Moroccan Civil society.   |
| Jun 19, 2013 | Albania    | EU           | Antoine Avignon, EU Delegation in Albania | Borut Rubinic                                    | Presentation of CEPF and discussion about complementary activities and possible co-funding etc. Possibilities for cooperation and co-funding through EU funding mechanisms were identified, feedback was very realistic but generally very positive   |
| Oct 23,      | Tunisia    | EU           | Stefano Corrado                           | Awatef Abiadh                                    | Discussions about EU activities, future projects on coastal areas,  |

|              |         |                           |   |   |   |
|--------------|---------|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| 2013         |         |                           |   | Pierre Carret.  | potential for synergies. Exchange on the assessment of Tunisian NGOs undertaken by EU.  |
| Oct 23, 2013 | Tunisia | GEF                       | Sabria Bnoui  | Awatef Abiadh<br>Pierre Carret.                             | Presentation of the CEPF portfolio and strategy. Exchange on the GEF/World Bank project on ecotourism. Discussion on GEF 5 allocation with activities on ecotourism mostly in saharian areas. |
| Oct 22, 2013 | Tunisia | AFD,<br>French<br>Embassy | M-H Cordet (Fr<br>Embassy)<br>Audrey Séon,<br>Didier Berdaguer<br>(AFD) | Awatef Abiadh<br>Pierre Carret<br>Antonia<br>Cermak-Terzian | Presentation of CEPF activities in Tunisia. Discussion about French Embassy projects to support civil society. Presentation of AFD and FFEM projects in environment and rural development.    |

In the year 2013, discussion took place with MAVA Foundation and the French GEF (*Fonds français pour l'Environnement Mondial, FFEM*) to study the possibility to use CEPF as an avenue for a small grant mechanism for North Africa. The discussion were not conclusive – as CEPF could not accommodate some of the requirements MAVA and FFEM were looking for, in particular regarding the amount of small grants as well as the themes and geographies to be covered. Nevertheless, the engagement with MAVA led to the commitment from the foundation to support the Strategic Direction 1 for an amount in the range of one million Swiss francs, to be finalized in early 2014.

CEPF also participated to several Donors event, and in particular to the Mediterranean Donors Round Table organized by MAVA foundation in Venice on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 and in Marseille (at the time of the Conference on Marine Protected Areas) in October 2013. These meetings allowed building good relationship with foundations (MAVA, Oak, Prince Albert II de Monaco, Ensemble...), paving the way for further collaboration in the future.

## Annex 1: Progress Against the Logframe

| Objective  | Targets  | Progress to date (December 2013)   |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Engage civil society in the conservation of globally threatened biodiversity through targeted investments with maximum impact on the highest conservation and ecosystem services priorities</p> | <p><i>(note: due to eligibility issues, this target is now of 42 KBAs in 5 priority corridors)</i></p> <p>NGOs and civil society actors from CEPF eligible countries, with an emphasis on the priority 6 corridors and 70 key biodiversity areas, effectively participate in conservation programs guided by the ecosystem profile.</p> <p>Development plans, projects and policies which influence the priority 6 corridors and 70 key biodiversity areas mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services, with a focus on tourism, water and agriculture.</p> <p>70 priority key biodiversity areas have strengthened protection and management.</p> <p>Strategic areas of production landscapes of six priority corridors under improved management for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services.</p> <p>The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot ecosystem profile influences and complements other donor's investment strategies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 38 organizations involved as main grantees on 44 projects (20 Small grants and 24 Large grants)</li> <li>- Projects have started in 36 KBAs; all eligible corridors concerned.</li> <br/> <li>- <i>No result yet</i></li> <br/> <li>- <i>No result yet</i></li> <br/> <li>- <i>No result yet.</i></li> <br/> <li>- <i>The Ecosystem Profile, co-founded by MAVA Foundation and Prince Albert II Foundation, has been widely distributed.</i></li> </ul> |

| Intermediate Outcomes   | Intermediate Indicators  | Progress to date (December 2013)   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Outcome 1.</b><br/>Negative effects of coastal development, especially those associated with tourism, minimized via promoting Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and sustainable nature-based economic alternatives, with a focus on the priority corridors of the (1) Southwest Balkans, (2) Cyrenaican Peninsula, and (3) Mountains, Plateaus, and Wetlands of Algerian Tell and Tunisia, and in 20 coastal and marine priority key biodiversity areas in other corridors.</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$2,500,000</p> | <p>Number of income generation projects that contribute to conservation of a key biodiversity area.</p> <p>Number of tourism development plans, tourism authorities, and tourism businesses adopting safeguards and environmentally friendly practices where CEPF investment will take place</p> <p>Coverage area of coastal zones subject of Integrated Coastal Zone Management plans or similar planning tools</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Southwest Balkans</u>: 5 projects awarded on ecotourism with expected income generation results (no result yet)</li> <li>- <u>Cyrenaican Peninsula</u>: no projects awarded on ecotourism yet</li> <li>- <u>Mountains, Plateaus, and Wetlands of Algerian Tell and Tunisia</u>: 2 projects awarded on ecotourism with expected income generation results (no result yet) on 6 KBAs</li> <li>- <u>Other KBAs not in corridors</u>: 2 projects with expected income generation results in Cape Verde</li> <br/> <li>- <i>No result yet.</i></li> <br/> <li>- Civil society engaged to influence Coastal Planning in Montenegro (two projects) – Plan not finalized yet.</li> <li>- 14 KBAs with CEPF-funded project to improved coastal zone management (MNE1 (4 projects), CPV1, CPV2, CPV3, ALB5, ALB8, TUN17, TUN18, TUN4, TUN11, TUN46, TUN23, LBY6 (2 projects), DZA5)</li> </ul> |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Outcome 2.</b><br/>Sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources established with a focus on the priority corridors of the (1) Atlas Mountains, (2) Taurus Mountains, (3) Orontes Valley and Lebanon Mountains, and (4) Southwest Balkans. The lessons learned shared and replicated from and with other river basin management experiences elsewhere in the Mediterranean.<br/><b>Budget: \$3,000,000</b></p> | <p>Number of basins where IRBM has started</p> <p>Stronger legal basis for IRBM</p> <p>Hectares of habitats restored or protected through innovative financing triggered by CEPF investments</p> <p>Number of initiatives with significant impact to reduce water consumption</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No result yet.</li> <li>- Number of KBAs with CEPF-funded projects: 4 (MAR23, Mar24, MAR20, MAR26)</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|

| Intermediate Outcomes  | Intermediate Indicators  | Progress to date.  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Outcome 3.</b><br/>Conservation status of 70 priority key biodiversity areas improved via enhancing the protected area systems, supporting local communities and promoting international cooperation.<br/><b>Budget: \$3,505,000</b></p> | <p>Demonstrable improvements in the conservation and management of priority key biodiversity areas as guided by formal management plan or other appropriate documents.</p> <p>Number of hectares brought under new or upgraded protection.</p> | <p>Balkans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 projects awarded to improve management of 5 KBAs. Baseline METT reports gathered for future measurement of progress.</li> <li>- Demonstrable improvement in Hutovo Blato Nature Park (4,100 ha, Bosnia-Herzegovina) with effective hunting ban leading to increase of wintering birds populations already noticeable in 2013</li> </ul> <p>Middle East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 projects awarded to improve management of 5 KBAs. Baseline METT reports gathered for future measurement of progress.</li> </ul> <p>North Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 projects awarded to improve management of 4 KBAs. Baseline METT reports gathered for future measurement of progress.</li> </ul> <p>- No result yet</p> |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | <p>Percent and number of grants that enable effective stewardship by local communities for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.</p> | <p>Balkans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 83% of the grants under SD3 with objectives include increased stewardship of local communities (two projects on Skadar lake are focusing intensively to work with local fishermen, farmers, hunters and other stakeholders that use lake resources ; in Hutovo blato Nature Park in Bosnia and Herzegovina local communities are highly involved in discussions and preventions of illegal hunting; in Trebižat river KBA local communities were highly involved in promotional events and volunteers from local CSOs and other volunteers have been involved in cleaning of the river)</li> </ul> <p>Middle-East:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 55% of the grants under SD3 which objectives include increased stewardship of local communities (in the Anti Lebanon Mountain KBA, empowering women, and build the capacities of the local community to be able to manage their natural and cultural capital. In Jordan Mujib biosphere reserve, one small projects is working with local using new technology to produce green fodder for livestock throughout the year, to support local communities depending on the reserve for grazing activities.</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p>North Africa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 75% of the grants under SD3 which objectives include increased stewardship of local communities (one project in Toubkal with Global Diversity Foundation is working with local community on improving livelihood and stop the uncontrolled collecting of medicinal and aromatic species by building their capacity and giving them an alternative to increase their income. Another project lead by Moroccan Primate Conservation is working closely with the local</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  |   | <p>community in the conservation of Barbary macaque to improve their knowledge about the species and its ecotouristic value. They are working closely with them to stop the commerce of this emblematic species.</p> <p>Projects in 19 KBAs (LBN22, LBN3, JOR1, JOR2, BIH1(2 projects), BIH2 (4 projects), ALB7/MNE5 (3 projects), HRV1, MKD4, MAR24; Project Tour du Valat: MAR24, MAR27, DZA26, DZA17, TUN12, TUN9, LBY5, LBY6; Project IUCN for North Africa: MAR22, MAR24, TUN12, TUN9, DZA26, LBY5)</p> |
| <p><b>Outcome 4.</b><br/>Strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment provided through a regional implementation team.</p> | <p>Regional Implementation Team performance in fulfilling the approved Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Number of groups receiving grants that achieve a satisfactory score on final performance scorecard.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actual performance of RIT approved by CEPF Secretariat</li> <li>- <i>Not yet available.</i></li> </ul>  |



## Annex 2. Active Grants as of December 31, 2011

**Strategic Direction 1. Promote civil society involvement in Integrated Coastal Zone Management to minimize the negative effects of coastal development in three priority corridors (Southwest Balkans; Cyrenaican Peninsula; and Mountains, Plateaus and Wetlands of Algerian Tell and Tunisia), and in 20 coastal and marine priority key biodiversity areas in other corridors**

### **Engaging Civil Society in Integrated Coastal Zone Management Planning**

Assist in the implementation of the Coastal Area Management Programme Project in the municipality of Ulcinj with a focus on the Delta Bojana Key Biodiversity Area. Improve the capacity of national and local institutions to implement Integrated Coastal Zone Management (IZCM) by raising the level of awareness of the value of natural resources and the threats from unsustainable development patterns.

Funding: \$58,550  
Grant Term: 1/1/2013 - 6/30/2014  
Grantee: Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development

### **Protecting Threatened and Endemic Species in Cape Verde: A Major Island Restoration Project**

Undertake the planning phase for the rehabilitation of Santa Luzia Island and establish biosecurity protocols with a view to the future translocation of the Critically Endangered Raso lark (*Alauda razae*). Engage with the Cape Verde protected-area authorities and local fishing communities and explore the potential for ecotourism activities within the Santa Luzia Island Natural Reserve and the Brancos and Raso Islets Integrated Reserve.

Funding: \$222,298  
Grant Term: 1/1/2013 - 6/30/2014  
Grantee: Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves

### **Albania Field Project: Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas**

Develop a sustainable tourism management plan for the Karaburun-Sazan Marine National Park and surrounding area; increase the local population and visiting tourists' awareness of the benefits of marine protected areas; and promote sustainable tourism and identify potential nature-based tourism initiatives. These activities complement the sustainable economic activities in Mediterranean marine protected areas led by the WWF Mediterranean Programme.

Funding: \$210,000  
Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 5/31/2016  
Grantee: Institute of Nature Conservation in Albania

#### **Ecotourism in Ulcinj Salina**

Restore the infrastructure at Ulcinj Salina to create a tourist destination and gift shop showcasing the importance of this site for migrating birds on the Adriatic flyway. Train local guides to lead nature walks, learning from an exchange visit to Isola della Cona, Italy, and undertake regular monitoring of bird species in the salt pans.

Funding: \$170,976  
Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 5/31/2015  
Grantee: NGO Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro

#### **Preserve and Enhance Sustainable Tourism Between Lalzi Bay and Berat, Albania**

Engage young Albanians, civil society organizations and government entities in promoting sustainable tourism practices, especially in Berat and Lalzi Bay. This includes the creation of a "Green Radio" station and website aimed at promoting a balanced ecosystem approach that addresses pollution, waste management and other impacts of mass tourism in coastal areas.

Funding: \$63,632  
Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 11/30/2014  
Grantee: Istituto Sindacale Per La Cooperazione Allo Sviluppo

#### **Ecotourism Activities for the Conservation of Key Biodiversity Sites in Northern Tunisia**

Support the full participation of local communities in the management of five of the most important bird areas of Tunisia. The five sites are organized as a network, with each of them benefiting from support to rehabilitate tourism infrastructures and train birding guides. Association des Amis des Oiseaux, together with four local partner organizations, will create a web platform for promotion of the sites and their ecotourism facilities, allowing tourists to learn more about biodiversity while also organizing their trip and booking accommodations and tours.

Funding: \$246,746

Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 12/31/2015  
Grantee: Association Les Amis des Oiseaux

**Land of Eagles and Castles: Pilot Sustainable Tourism Model for the Albanian Adriatic Coastline**

Identify, develop and market environmentally sound tourism opportunities along the Albanian coast in conjunction with relevant stakeholders such as local community associations, the tourism industry and government departments. These nature-based tourism activities will benefit biodiversity conservation, especially in priority key biodiversity areas, as well as the region's historical and cultural heritage.

Funding: \$248,623  
Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2016  
Grantee: Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania

**Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas**

Improve the management of two Mediterranean marine protected areas, Ain-el-Ghazalah Bay in Libya and Cap Negro-Cap Serrat in Tunisia, through participatory planning and stakeholder engagement of civil society, nongovernmental organizations and government authorities to secure commitment and good governance. Promote marine protected areas as tools to deliver social and economic benefits in addition to their conservation value.

Funding: \$350,656  
Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2016  
Grantee: WWF European Policy Programme-Branch Office

**Support Local Communities to Implement Nature-Based Tourism Practices Around Sasko Lake**

Promote sustainable tourism for the Bojana Delta of Montenegro, focusing on Sasko Lake, and improving local livelihoods by building the capacity of stakeholders and fostering a local tourism network. Seek to improve the legal protected area status of the lake to benefit nature conservation and minimize negative impacts to the lake and its biodiversity.

Funding: \$123,820  
Grant Term: 10/1/2013 - 3/31/2016

Grantee: NGO Green Home

**Fostering and Bringing Together Nature, Tourism and Civil Society at Bojana Delta Through Integrated Coastal Zone Management**

Mitigate the threats from unsustainable tourism development of Bojana Delta in Montenegro through the development of a comprehensive integrated coastal zone management plan for this pristine area through a community-based, participatory approach. This process will identify alternative sustainable coastal tourism opportunities that will preserve coastal ecosystems, benefit natural resources and protect priority sites as well as maintain cultural heritage integrating sport, cultural and recreational activities.

Funding: \$240,382

Grant Term: 11/1/2013 - 11/30/2015

Grantee: ECNC Land & Sea Group Agrupación Europea de Interés Económico

**Environmental Initiatives to Enhance Ecofriendly Tourism in Boa Vista Island, Cape Verde**

Enhance ecotourism on Boa Vista Island by developing information on the beach, increasing environmental awareness and encouraging outdoor tourism in the region. The project will target fisherman, visitors, tourists, tourist agents and local stakeholders. A good comprehension of green tourism and the development of an official "environmentally friendly" logo for companies and organizations that stick to eco-friendly tourism are expected.

Funding: \$19,800

Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014

Grantee: BIOS.CV – Association for the Conservation of the Environment and Sustainable Development (BIOS.CV)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

**Environmental awareness of the local community and decision makers in Tobrouk and Ain Alghazallah.**

Raise awareness about the importance of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) and their protection, particularly around Ain Alghazallah and Toubrouk in the Cyrenaican Peninsula. The target groups include hunters, Imams, relevant stakeholders and an environmental club that will be created in two schools around the KBAs.

Funding: \$19,960

Grant Term: 10/1/2013 - 10/30/2014

Grantee: Libyan Society for Birds (LSB)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **A Study for the Development of Ecotourism Activities at Guerbes Sanhadja, Algeria**

Conduct a series of studies with the aim of building an ecotourism trail in the wetland complex of Sanhadja, Algeria. Lead a study on the tourism market in the region and the feasibility of the trail from a local attraction point of view. Involve the local community of Sanhadja in the project, raising awareness about the importance of an ecotourism trail in relation to increased income within the community.

Funding: \$19,110

Grant Term: 11/1/2013 - 11/30/2014

Grantee: Association Promotion des Femmes Rurales de Wilaya de Skikda (Skikda)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

### **Strategic Direction 2. Establish the sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources with a focus on the priority corridors of the (1) Atlas Mountains, (2) Taurus Mountains, (3) Orontes Valley and Lebanon Mountains and (4) Southwest Balkans**

#### **Valuing Ecotourism, Fish and Aquatic Biodiversity of the Moroccan Atlas for Contribution to the Preservation of Water Resources in Ifrane National Parks and High Atlas Oriental**

Work with the National Fishermen Association in the mountains of the Moroccan Atlas to introduce best practices for leisure fishing and to set up a monitoring system for sustainable use of freshwater resources, based on a network of fishing guards. Raise awareness on the the ecological importance of the mountains of the Moroccan Atlas, which hosts important freshwater biodiversity, and promote sustainable ecotourism in the area.

Funding: \$240,420

Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 5/31/2015

Grantee: Association Marocaine pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature

#### **Ensuring the Preservation and Enhancement of Atlas Mountain Ecosystems through the Capacity Building of Local Stakeholders in Sustainable Water Management**

Build the capacity of local communities in the protection of water resources, promote production techniques concerned with the conservation of resources, and strength programs of education and awareness on water management with civil society.

Funding: \$19,700  
Grant Term: 8/1/2013 - 7/31/2014  
Grantee: Enda Maghreb (ENDA)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

### **Implementation of Good Agricultural Practices and Contributing to the Protection and Ecological Integrity of the Oued Boufekrane River**

Establish new practices that conserve water resources and avoid degradation of the Oued Boufekrane River in Morocco. The project will diagnose the actual state of agricultural practices around the river, and identify what kind of sustainable agricultural practice should be established.

Funding: \$19,901  
Grant Term: 10/1/2013 - 9/30/2014  
Grantee: Section d'Ifrane de l'Association des Enseignants des Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre au Maroc (AVEST)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

### **Strategic Direction 3. Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas**

#### **Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation Priorities for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot**

Collate and map ecological data for key freshwater species groups in the eastern Mediterranean to identify Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and assess human use. Hold stakeholder workshops throughout the Mediterranean hotspot focused on KBAs to refine potential site boundaries, identify sustainable management and conservation actions, and identify those organizations to take the lead on conservation actions at each site.

Funding: \$248,332  
Grant Term: 7/1/2012 - 6/30/2014  
Grantee: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

#### **Demonstrating Sustainable Management of Important Eastern Mediterranean Forests and Key Biodiversity Areas in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains**

Revive the traditional Hima approach of land husbandry, integrating the grazing needs of the local shepherds into a sustainable management plan within a

collaboratively agreed-upon zone of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains Key Biodiversity Area.

Funding: \$167,750  
Grant Term: 3/1/2013 - 8/31/2014  
Grantee: Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon

#### **Strengthening Management Planning of Mujib as a Biosphere Reserve in Jordan**

Adopt a collaborative approach involving the local communities in the revision and update of the Mujib Reserve new management plan for the period 2013-2018. This process will adopt the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) zonation schemes as well as improve the capacity of local civil society organizations and socioeconomic development opportunities.

Funding: \$242,160  
Grant Term: 3/1/2013 - 3/31/2015  
Grantee: The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature

#### **Protection of Bats in the Neretva River Catchment Area**

Raise awareness among the general public, tourists, the scientific community and government about the positive contributions and threats to bat species living in the caves of the Karst region of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This will culminate with the first national "Bat Night" festival as part of the EUROBATS program. Create a network of volunteer bat monitors to provide accurate data on the occurrence and activity of bat species that will be collated into national and international databases.

Funding: \$38,000  
Grant Term: 5/1/2013 - 4/30/2015  
Grantee: Center for Karst and Speleology

#### **Improving the Management of Hutovo Blato Nature Park**

Improve the management of Hutovo Blato Nature Park by establishing an effective ranger service and adopting a sophisticated, status-quo monitoring system and scientific methods for the monitoring of species and habitats, especially birds. Promote the park as a tourist destination locally and internationally to increase tourism revenue.

Funding: \$194,908  
Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 5/31/2015  
Grantee: EuroNatur Foundation

**Conservation of Pelicans, a Key Biodiversity Species of Skadar Lake**

Improve the cross-border management of Lake Skadar through research into the breeding ecology of the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*). Train relevant national institutions in monitoring protocols and data management. Raise awareness of the threats faced among all stakeholders and promote "pelican-friendly" tourism activities that will mitigate disturbance to the colony while allowing visitors a better viewing experience.

Funding: \$218,130  
Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2016  
Grantee: Noe Conservation

**Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods and Promoting Community Management of Shouf Biosphere Reserve**

Increase awareness of the importance of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve Protected Area and develop financial mechanisms, including handicraft production, to contribute to the economy of the surrounding area. Undertake an assessment of the ecosystem services, especially water, and their economic value to the surrounding populations and local and national decision makers.

Funding: \$160,300  
Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 12/31/2014  
Grantee: Al-Shouf Cedar Society

**Monitoring Waterbirds in North Africa for the Conservation of Wetland Areas**

Support the creation of site support groups to enhance the dialogue between site managers and local communities and develop a methodology adapted to the North African context to improve wetland management based on the use of bird indicators. The Fondation Tour du Valat project focuses on eight important wetlands in Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Algeria, from the salted marshes on the shores to high altitude lakes in the Atlas Mountains.

Funding: \$230,000  
Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2015



Grantee: Fondation Tour du Valat

**Promoting Trebizat as an Ecotourism Destination**

Involve the local community, nongovernmental organizations and authorities to promote the sustainable development of Trebizat tributary through the wise use of natural resources. Ecotourism activities will showcase local products, natural values and the cultural heritage of the area.

Funding: \$110,000

Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014

Grantee: The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

**Securing the Future of Hutovo Blato Nature Park**

Investigate long-term financial mechanisms for the improved management of the Hutovo Blato National Park based upon the ecosystem services that the protected area provides for both hydropower generation and water services to inhabitants downstream. Train rangers and guides in ecological and bird monitoring through effective data management techniques and promote this key site as an ecotourism destination through local and international tour operators.

Funding: \$169,846

Grant Term: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2015

Grantee: WWF European Policy Programme-Branch Office

**Supporting the Long-Term Sustainable Management of Transboundary Lake Skadar**

Enable the effective transboundary management of Lake Skadar, which is located between Albania and Montenegro, by improving the capacity and management practices of its protected areas. Diminish illegal activities by strengthening law enforcement and increasing the participation of local civil society organizations in monitoring and management. Raise awareness and increase transparency among key stakeholders on the importance of biodiversity conservation.

Funding: \$328,563

Grant Term: 8/1/2013 - 6/30/2016

Grantee: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

**Promote the Value of Key Biodiversity Areas by Strengthening the Role of Civil Society Organizations in Their Management and Conservation in North Africa**

Improve the management of six key biodiversity areas in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya by undertaking a thorough review of previous approaches to assess their effectiveness and by promoting communication and dialogue between nongovernmental organizations and management authorities. Set up an exchange visit with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan to compare the respective management approaches as a learning opportunity.

Funding: \$392,502  
Grant Term: 9/1/2013 - 8/31/2015  
Grantee: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

**Determining Important Areas for Plants and Creating Micro-Reserves to Conserve Rare or Endemic Species in Lebanon**

Collate and analyze data on plant distribution and abundance to identify important plant areas within Lebanon. Using this data, liaise with land owners to establish three micro-reserves at Ehmej, Sarada and Baskinta in Lebanon to secure the long-term survival of these sites and their species. Each of these sites harbors rare and threatened plant species and are under pressure from activities including quarrying and other unsustainable practices.

Funding: \$174,828  
Grant Term: 10/1/2013 - 3/31/2016  
Grantee: Université Saint-Joseph

**Engaging Civil Societies in Harmonization of Actions for Improving the Conservation and Management Effectiveness of Lake Skadar**

Facilitate a group of civil society organizations working to protect Lake Skadar, focusing on sharing lessons learned and best practices from other river basin management experiences elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Coordination of all stakeholders through a workshop and study visit aims to improve the knowledge-base of the region and create a better model of sustainable development, leading to improved management of the conservation priorities for Lake Skadar.

Funding: \$19,375  
Grant Term: 12/5/2012 - 3/5/2013  
Grantee: NGO Green Home (GREEN HOME)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

**Sustainable Livelihoods and Community Management of Medicinal Plants and Important Plant Areas of the High Atlas Mountains**

Promote sustainable harvesting and community-based cultivation of medicinal plants to address threats to important plant areas near key biodiversity areas in the High Atlas Mountains. Specific conservation actions will be determined through stakeholder workshops and researching the plant species of concern that are currently harvested from communal lands, forest domains and protected areas in the central part of the Atlas Mountain Conservation Corridor of Morocco.

Funding: \$19,900  
Grant Term: 5/1/2013 - 10/31/2014  
Grantee: Global Diversity Foundation (GDF)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **Locating the Wild Grapevine (*Vitis Vinifera* L. Subsp. *sylvestris*) Along the River Banks of Krka (Croatia)**

Explore potential sites within and around the Krka River National Park Key Biodiversity Area in order to locate natural populations of the wild grapevine (*Vitis vinifera sylvestris*). Locate and describe every population, sub-population and individual plant, and produce a distribution map with detailed descriptions of the related habitats and their threats. Produce a scientific report with recommendations for conservation and future management of the species.

Funding: \$2,700  
Grant Term: 5/1/2013 - 6/5/2013  
Grantee: Institute for Adriatic Crops and Karst Reclamation (IAC)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **Photographic Guide to Wildflowers of Lebanon with Emphasis on the Three Priority KBAs in Lebanon**

Improve the conservation and protection status of priority key biodiversity areas (KBAs) in Lebanon by identifying the major plant species occurring in these areas. Raise awareness through the publication of a photographic field guide depicting the wildflowers present. The guide will be simple to use by the general public and will include important information about the KBAs and the plants.

Funding: \$19,920  
Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 12/30/2014  
Grantee: Arts, Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon (AUL)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

**Protection of Underground Biodiversity in the Neretva River Catchment Area: Identifying and Raising the Awareness of Conservation Hotspots**

Establish a preliminary inventory of underground karst species in the Neretva River catchment area, identify current threats, and propose hotspots for conservation. Provide capacity building opportunities to train local experts and raise awareness among the general public, tourists, the scientific community and government on the importance of protecting the underground biodiversity.

Funding: \$15,300

Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 5/31/2014

Grantee: Centar za krš i speleologiju (Center for Karst and Speleology) (CKS)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

**Karst Freshwater Habitats: Identification and Participatory Conservation Planning of Threatened Invertebrate and Fish Species**

Identify the occurrence and distribution of freshwater invertebrate and fish species that can be used as biodiversity indicators for key habitats in the Neretva river catchment. Work with young researchers, local stakeholders and governmental institutions to identify and protect the biodiversity hotspots identified.

Funding: \$19,850

Grant Term: 6/1/2013 - 9/30/2014

Grantee: Society for Biological Research and Protection of Nature (BIO.LOG)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

**Green Fodder Pilot Project**

Implement a pioneer project using new technology to produce green fodder for livestock on a large scale throughout the year, without the depletion of the soil, water and existing space. Develop financial mechanisms for the local community that support the protected area, create new job opportunities, enhance sustainable livelihoods, reduce the cost of meat and dairy products, and promote community management. The project will recycle water and produce minimal pollution, decreasing the pressure on the Mujib Reserve in Jordan.

Funding: \$19,975

Grant Term: 6/15/2013 - 12/15/2013

Grantee: The United Society for Developing Water Resources and Environment (USDWE)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **Integrated Ecosystem Management of Tel Al Arbin Special Conservation Area, Jordan River Key Biodiversity Area**

Conserve the Endangered ana tree (*Acacia albida*), and its associated flora and fauna, in its last standing habitat in the Jordan River Basin. The project also includes promoting sustainable agriculture through the establishment of pilot local farms, demonstrating a model for integrating nature conservation into socioeconomic development in local communities, and providing an incentive for local communities to conserve and sustain their surrounding ecosystems, which are critical for the Jordan River Basin.

Funding: \$19,700

Grant Term: 6/25/2013 - 6/24/2014

Grantee: Bab Assalam Women's Cooperative (BASWC)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **Conservation of Wild Grapevine (*Vitis Vinifera L. Subsp. sylvestris*) in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Explore and conserve remaining populations of wild grapevine (*Vitis vinifera sylvestris*) in the Karst region of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This largely unknown wild descent of cultivated grapevine is disappearing rapidly from wilderness and needs immediate protection throughout its original distribution range.

Funding: \$16,970

Grant Term: 6/28/2013 - 12/30/2014

Grantee: Institute for Adriatic Crops and Karst Reclamation (IAC)

Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **A Survey of the Distribution of Olm (*Proteus anguinus*) by Environmental DNA Sampling**

Develop environmental DNA sampling to identify the presence of Olm (*Proteus anquinus*), an endemic Balkan cave amphibian, at sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina within and outside the known distribution range. Raise awareness on the Olm's vulnerability and the importance of its habitat.

Funding: \$16,515

Grant Term: 6/28/2013 - 6/30/2014  
Grantee: Društvo Za Jamsko Biologijo -Society of Cave Biology (SCB)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **Raising Awareness on Hunting and Biodiversity Conservation in Al Chouf Cedars Nature Reserve Key Biodiversity Area**

Raise the awareness of local community, local authority and law enforcement officers on the importance and the methods for fighting illegal hunting. The proposed strategy will be implemented through two training workshops during the hunting season on advanced and fast techniques on bird identification that will allow the local community to support law enforcement officers, forest guards and guards of protected areas to control illegal hunting practices mainly in Chouf Niha, one of the most important bottle-neck sites in Lebanon.

Funding: \$16,000  
Grant Term: 7/20/2013 - 6/30/2014  
Grantee: Environment For Life (EFL)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **Education of the Public on Sustainable Water Use and the Protection of Endemic Fish in the Neretva River Valley**

Inform and educate the public about the need for the sustainable use of water in the karst fields of eastern Herzegovina that are essential for the ecological vitality of the lower Neretva Valley. Protect endemic fish species and their spawning grounds in the Buna, Bunica and Bregava rivers of the Neretva catchment area.

Funding: \$18,750  
Grant Term: 8/1/2013 - 7/30/2014  
Grantee: Hrvatska Ekološka Udruga (BUNA)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

#### **Production of Speleological Cadaster for the Trebižat Area**

Produce a cadaster of underground objects and evaluate their ecological importance in the area of the Trebižat River, which is known for its richness of caves, underground water and land ecosystems, and cave fauna that have not been systematically surveyed and remain largely unexplored.

Funding: \$18,684  
Grant Term: 8/23/2013 - 5/30/2014  
Grantee: Mountain Rescue Service of Herzegovina (Hercegovačka Gorska Sluzba Spasavanja) (HGSS)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

**Identification of Habitat Fragmentation, the Degree of Landscape Connectivity and Corridors to Restore the Endangered Barbary Macaque Species**

Protect the Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*) through the protection of its habitat. The main objectives are to point out the connectivity between forest fragments in Ifrane National Park in Morocco, identifying areas that need restoration to increase functional connectivity and/or prevent further decline of the species, and suggesting the necessary adjustments to these restorations.

Funding: \$19,152  
Grant Term: 10/1/2013 - 11/30/2014  
Grantee: Stichting Moroccan Primate Conservation (MPC)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

**Education and Capacity Building for Conservation of the Priority KBA Lake Dojran**

Initiate capacity building activities that are necessary for the future management of Lake Dojran, a priority key biodiversity area, including the creation of local conservation groups, training young local conservationists with monitoring skills, producing a booklet of techniques on how to monitor the lake ecosystem and raising awareness through the media.

Funding: \$19,282  
Grant Term: 11/1/2013 - 10/31/2014  
Grantee: Macedonian Ecological Society (MES)  
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*