



**Final Assessment of CEPF investment in  
The Mediterranean Basin Hotspot  
(Phase I – 2012-2017)**

**May 2018**

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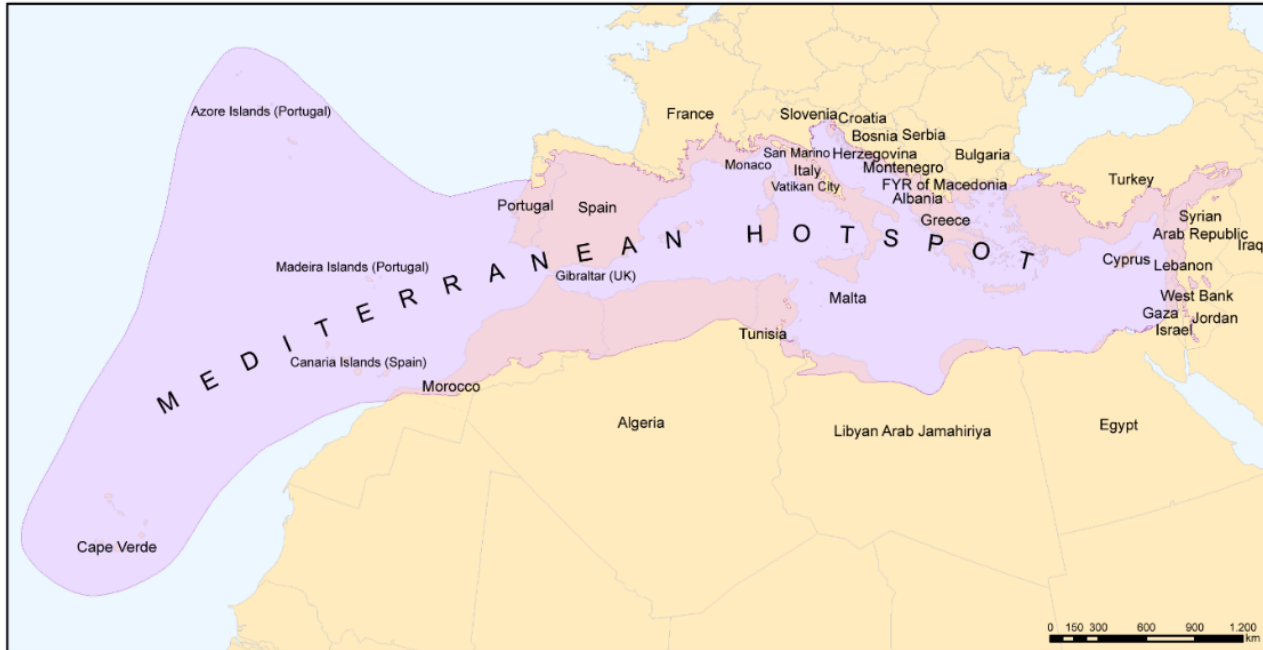
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## Introduction

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 endemic to the hotspot, yet, more are being discovered every year. A total of 1,110 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) were identified covering more than 40.7 million hectares, or approximately 19.5% of the total hotspot. Of the total, 512 contain coastal or marine habitat, highlighting the importance of these sites for both terrestrial and marine conservation. In addition, 17 biodiversity conservation corridors were identified containing 435 of the key biodiversity areas.

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 Mediterranean basin is by far the largest global tourism destination, attracting almost a third of the world's international tourists (306 million out of 980 million worldwide) – a number expected to reach 500 million by 2030 (UNWTO 2012). Species populations in the hotspot have become increasingly fragmented and isolated as a result of infrastructural development triggered by the tourism industry and urban development. 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.

This report aims to assess attainment of the goals set in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot ecosystem profile and to summarize lessons arising from the grant portfolio over the 2011-2017 investment phase. It draws on experience, lessons learned and project reports generated by civil society groups implementing CEPF grants. In addition, it builds upon previous Annual Portfolio Overview reports as well as the 2015 Mid-Term Assessment report.

In 2016, based on preliminary results from the first phase, and to prevent a funding gap, the CEPF donor council approved the updating of the ecosystem profile, as a basis for a further five-year program of support. The Ecosystem Profile<sup>1</sup> was updated during the June 2016-March 2017 period, following a participatory process with participation of more than 500 experts and representatives of the conservation community of the region. The Profile was approved by CEPF Donors in July 2017, with an initial allocation of \$ 10 million for 2017-2022 period. The second phase of CEPF investment in the Mediterranean Basin started on October 2017.

## I. Niche and Strategy for CEPF Investment

CEPF's niche for the first phase of investment was 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 are intended 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 were explored.

The importance of supporting civil society was reinforced with the important political changes which have 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 cases led the way to a nascent 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.

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 through integrated approach associating local communities. Furthermore, civil society organizations (CSOs) can effectively stimulate partnership between the governments and the corporate sector toward conservation of biodiversity.

The CEPF investment strategy for the Mediterranean Basin comprised 13 investment priorities, grouped into four strategic directions (Table 1). CEPF investment in the hotspot, though of regional scope and ambition, was *de facto* limited to 12 countries during the 2012-2017 investment period, for security and other reasons. Table 2 provides a description of Mediterranean country eligibility for CEPF funding. This situation reduced the number of CEPF priority KBAs in which CEPF has actually invested, in comparison with the strategy presented in the Ecosystem Profile.

The CEPF investment effectively started in the region in June 2012 with the recruitment of the Regional Implementation Team and granting of the first projects selected from the initial Call for Proposals, launched

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cepf.net/resources/documents/mediterranean-basin-ecosystem-profile-2017](http://www.cepf.net/resources/documents/mediterranean-basin-ecosystem-profile-2017)

in January 2012. The initial budget for the Mediterranean Basin was US\$ 10 million; it increased in 2013 with an additional contribution from the MAVA Foundation to reach US\$ 11,016,744.

**Table 1 CEPF Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities**

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	INVESTMENT PRIORITIES
<p><b>1. Promote civil society involvement in Integrated Coastal Zone Management to minimize the negative effects of coastal development</b> 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><b>2. Establish the sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources</b> 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><b>3. Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas</b></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><b>4. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a regional implementation team</b></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>

**Table 2. Eligible Countries and GEF Focal Point Endorsement Dates**

<b>Mediterranean Countries</b>	<b>Received CEPF Investment</b>	<b>Endorsement Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Albania	Yes	2011	
Algeria	Yes	November 2013	Became eligible in 2013 following GEF focal point endorsement and was not included in first Calls for Proposals
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Yes	June 2011	
Cape Verde	Yes	December 2011	
Croatia	Yes – until July 2013	December 2011	The adhesion of the country to European Union made it ineligible from July 2013.
Egypt	No	-	Formal GEF focal point endorsement was not secured. Security situation in 2010-2013 prevented potential investments.
Jordan	Yes	October 2011	
Lebanon	Yes	January 2012	
Libya	Yes	October 2012	Security situation has reduced CEPF investment in the country since mid-2013
Macedonia (FYR of)	Yes	September 2010	
Montenegro	Yes	October 2010	
Morocco	Yes	April 2012	
Palestinian Territories	No		Not eligible because the West Bank and Gaza are not members of the World Bank
Syria	No	2011	GEF focal point endorsement received but investments impossible due to security reasons.
Tunisia	Yes	2011	
Turkey	No	-	Formal GEF focal point endorsement was not secured - therefore preventing CEPF investment.
France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Slovenia, Greece, Monaco...	No	-	Not eligible due to being EU member States and/or not being World Bank client members

## II. Regional Implementation Team

The Regional Implementation Team (RIT) in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot was established to provide the strategic leadership and coordination of CEPF investment. The RIT supported CEPF for reaching out to CSOs, selecting letters of inquiry and supporting applicants in finalizing their proposals, monitoring the portfolio, communicating with all stakeholders in the relevant languages, and providing an overall coordination of CEPF investment. The RIT also managed the small grant program for grants below US\$ 20,000.

The RIT for the Mediterranean Basin consisted of a consortium of member organizations of the BirdLife Partnership, led by BirdLife International. The other partners were:

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

The structure and roles of the Regional Implementation Team are described below.

RIT Role	Staff		
<b>RIT Management</b>	Liz Smith RIT Manager	Richard Grimmett Director of Conservation	Serena Loh-Cornell Small Grant Mechanism Assistant
<b>Programme Officers</b>	Awatef Abiadh North Africa Programme Officer	Borut Rubinic Balkans Programme Officer	Sharif Jbour Middle East Programme Officer
<b>Strategic and Technical Support</b>	Alison Duncan Head of International Programmes	Damijan Denac Director of DOPPS	Ibrahim Khader Middle East Office Director
<b>Communications Support</b>	LPO Comms Team	Shaun Hurrell Comms Officer (Secretariat)	Majd Abu Zaghlan, Comms Officer (Middle East)

**Key:**

- BirdLife International – Secretariat and Middle East Office staff
- LPO (BirdLife France) staff
- DOPPS (BirdLife Slovenia) staff

### III. Impact Summary

#### **Biodiversity Conservation**

- Activities in 65 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)
- Strengthened management of 51 KBAs, covering 2,177,000 ha
- 8 new protected areas created, covering 27,651 ha
- 7 new protected areas expected, covering 115,000 ha. In total, therefore, CEPF is expected to have contributed to the creation of nearly 140,000 ha of new protected areas
- Projects to support management of 30 protected areas. 80% of target protected areas with improved management (measured by METT), covering 1,114,000 ha
- Improved management of natural resources in 1,485,000 ha of productive landscape, working with local communities

#### **Strengthening Civil Society**

- 108 projects supported (54 Large, 54 Small Grants)
- 91 beneficiary organizations
- 81% of grants to National/Local CSOs (60% of funding)
- 72% of organizations with increased capacity as monitored by Civil Society Capacity Tracking Tool ; 16% with large increase (over 25%)
- 8 networks of civil society created, 11 supported in total.

#### **Human well-being**

- 48 projects include community-based conservation actions
- 12,000 people with increased revenues through livelihood activities
- 400 jobs created in ecotourism and small businesses around the region.

#### **Enabling conditions.**

- Assessment of freshwater KBAs for 12 countries of the Mediterranean Basin
- Assessment of Important Plant Areas in Lebanon and Cape Verde
- CEPF grantees influenced 15 policies, laws or regulations, mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in 7 countries.



## IV. Implementation

### 1) Collaboration with CEPF Donors and other Funders

Several donors support biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean Hotspot, and several regional initiatives and platforms exist to foster partnership and collaboration. CEPF has, over the last few years, strengthened its relationship with the donor community working specifically with non-State actors in the field of conservation.

Several donors and important stakeholders are part of the CEPF MED Advisory Committee, which provides strategic advice to CEPF, and helps identify opportunities for collaboration (see table).

Since the start of investment in 2012, CEPF has participated in the annual meeting of the Mediterranean Donors Roundtable which brings together once a year representatives from Oak Foundation, Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM), Adessium Foundation, Fondation Mava pour la Nature, Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, Fundación Biodiversidad (Spain) and Thalassa Foundation.

The RIT and CEPF Secretariat have worked continuously to engage with GEF Focal points in all countries, first to secure their endorsement of the Strategy, but also to update them on the progress of CEPF investment. The CEPF and RIT supervision missions in the countries were used to meet personally with many of the CEPF donor representatives, including GEF Small Grants Programme, Agence française de Développement, European Union or the World Bank. The exchange of information and experience on local civil society actors has proven very useful – and several donor representatives have provided advice and reviews on project proposals.

CEPF is also involved in the Programme Petites Initiatives (PPI-OSCAN), funded by MAVA and FFEM and implemented by IUCN MEDPO, which supports local CSOs in North Africa. This partnership allows for synergies between the two programs – in particular with PPI supporting the continuation of actions initiated through CEPF support.

CEPF held several meetings with the Global Environment and Technology Fund (GETF), an institution supporting the management of the RAIN program of the Coca Cola Foundation on water management. While GETF had a good knowledge of CSOs in the development and humanitarian sectors, their contacts with environmental NGOs in some countries of the Mediterranean Basin was much more limited. CEPF presented several projects in need of further funding for consolidation or extension of activities. Through this collaboration, the Global Diversity Foundation (GDF) working in Morocco secured a \$ 300,000 grant to build on activities previously supported by CEPF, while Association des Amis des Oiseaux in Tunisia is in discussion regarding coastal wetland preservation – a program initiated by CEPF. CEPF also supported the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature in Jordan to receive additional support from Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation for implementation of an integrated water management plan initiated with CEPF funding.

**Table 3. Members of the Advisory Committee**

Members of the Advisory Committee	
Fabrice Bernard	Conservatoire du littoral (France)
Munir Adgham	GEF Small Grant Program (Jordan)
Antonio Troya	The IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
Aissa Moali	University of Bejaia (Algeria)
Myrsini Malakou	Society for the Protection of Prespa (Greece)
Bertrand de Montmollin	IUCN/SSC/MPSG Mediterranean Plant Specialist Group
Paule Gros	MAVA Foundation
Paolo Lombardi	WWF Mediterranean Programme Office
Constance Orbier	Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial
Raphaël Cuvelier	Prince Albert II Foundation (Monaco)
Jean Albert	Tour du Valat (France)
Ricardo Monteiro	UNDP/GSF Small Grant Programme, Cabo Verde
Gabriele Rechbauer	GIZ (Balkans)

CEPF also tracks leveraging effect of our grants, asking each grantee to declare the amount of cofunding leveraged at the end of the implementation. Based on this self-declaratory process, we can estimate that 38 grantees leveraged additional funding for implementation of their projects, amounting to \$ 4.205 million, i.e. close to 50% of the total amount granted by CEPF (\$ 8.667 million). (Note: no co-funding is required by CEPF at grant level).

## 2) Resource Allocation

Since January 2012, CEPF launched eight Calls for Proposals, receiving a total of 394 Letters of Inquiry (227 for Large Grants and 167 for Small Grants). The details of these calls are presented in the table below.

**Table 4. Calls for Proposals, January 2012-July 2015**

Release	Deadline	Specifications	Countries	Lols received	Approved
Jan. 2012	Feb. 2012	Large Grants Focus on regional	All eligible	40	6 (15%)
Oct. 2012	Nov. 2012	Large Grants All SDs	All eligible	77	19 (25%)
Nov. 2012	Dec. 2012	Small Grants All SDs	All eligible	97	19 (20%)
Jan. 2013	Feb. 2013	Large Grants All SDs	Algeria, Libya	15	1 (7%)
Jun. 2013	Jul. 2013	Large and Small Grants, SD 2	Albania, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Macedonia	LG: 34 SG: 12	LG: 7 (21%) SG: 3 (25%)
Nov. 2013	Jan. 2014	Small Grants All SDs	Albania, Algeria, Jordan, Libya, Macedonia, Morocco, and Tunisia	43	13 (30%)
Apr. 2014	May 2014	Large Grants SD 1	Algeria, Cape Verde, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia	27	7 (26%)
Oct. 2014	Nov. 2014	Large Grants SD 2	Balkans: Albania, Montenegro, Morocco and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.	34	5 (15%)
Jul. 2015	Sep. 2015	Small Grants SD 1	North Africa: Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia	15	3 (20%)
Grants by Invitation					11 (5 SG, 6 LG)

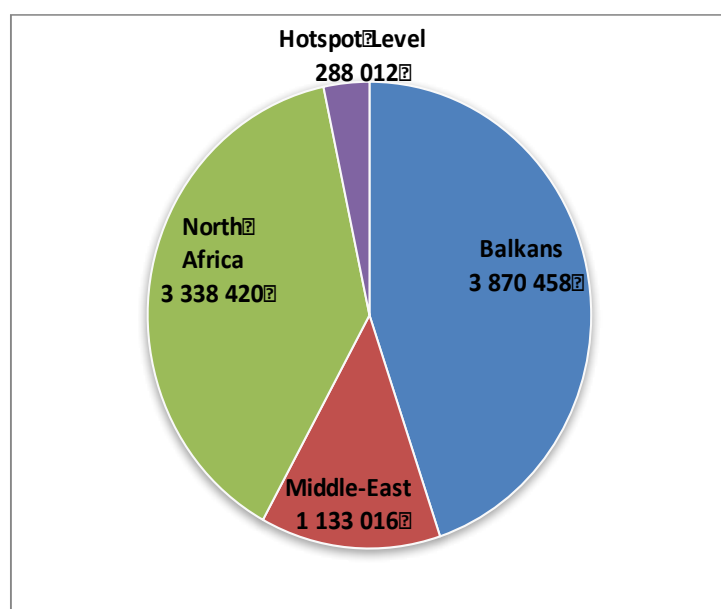
CEPF invested about \$ 10.67 million in the Mediterranean Basin during Phase I – representing 96.8% of the available budget<sup>2</sup>. The projects were evenly distributed between large and small grants (53 grants for each program – plus the grant for Regional Implementation Team<sup>2</sup>). The small grant portfolio amounted to \$ 846,000, with 80% of small grants going to local organizations.

**Table 5. Allocation of Resources per Strategic Direction**

Strategic Direction	Budget (\$)	Contracted Grants			Budget Balance (\$)	Percentage Contracted
		Total Amount	Large Grants	Small Grants		
Integrated Coastal Management	\$3 390 000	\$3 110 916	21	16	\$279 084	91,8%
Sustainable Management of Water Catchments	\$2 017 652	\$2 068 638	14	11	-\$50 986	102,5%
Strengthened KBA conservation	\$3 500 000	\$3 450 351	18	26	\$49 649	98,6%
Regional Implementation Team	\$2 109 092	\$2 035 742	1	0	\$73 350	96,5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11 016 744</b>	<b>\$10 665 647</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>351 097</b>	<b>96,8%</b>

### Investment by Sub-Regions and Countries

**Figure 1. Grant Awards by Sub-Region**



The Balkans sub-region received initially a larger share of grants, which was certainly a reflection of the higher capacities of CSOs. Two countries in North Africa endorsed the Profile at a later stage, leading to a delay in CEPF investment in this sub-region (see section II, 2). This situation was balanced during the second half of the investment phase, in particular thanks to dedicated efforts from the RIT to reach out to and support North African organizations, and to launch specific calls for this sub-region.

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 security situation. The detail by zone of implementation is provided in Table 6.

<sup>2</sup> Data presented in this table and subsequent analysis are based on figures available as of May 2018 ; two small

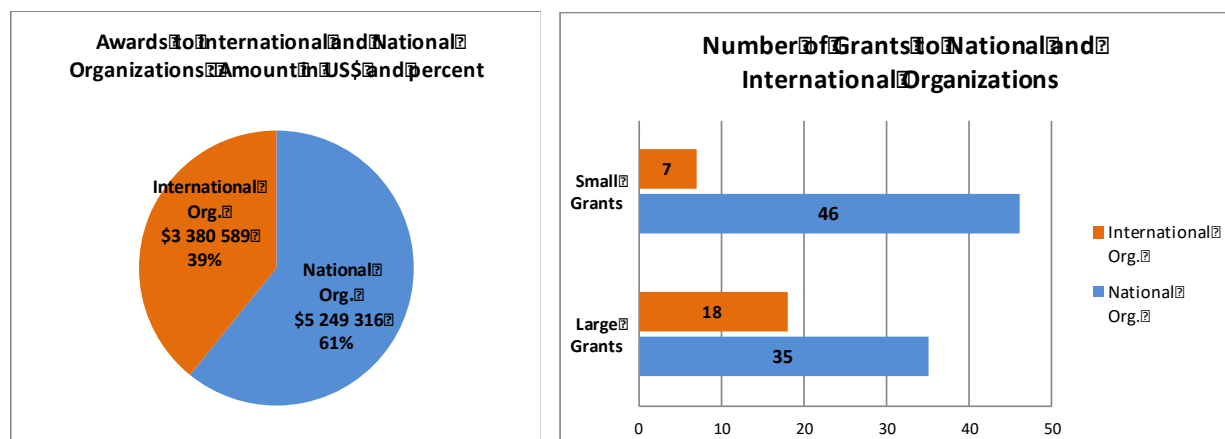
**Table 6 : Grants by Zone of Implementation (Number of Grants and Total Amount)**

	All grants (\$)	Large Grants (\$)	Small Grants (\$)	All grants	Large Grants	Small Grants
Cabo Verde	403 690	344 792	58 898	6	3	3
Morocco	918 386	749 095	153 082	12	4	8
Algeria	214 780	157 680	57 100	4	1	3
Tunisia	605 170	547 475	57 695	7	4	3
Libya	35 350	-	35 350	2	0	2
Regional Projects - North Africa	1 198 089	1 177 252	4 308	9	8	1
Jordan	319 013	242 103	76 910	6	1	5
Lebanon	814 003	770 693	43 310	8	4	4
Regional Projects - Middle-East	-	-	-	0	0	0
Montenegro	839 145	780 865	58 280	11	7	4
Albania	1 048 799	994 116	54 683	11	7	4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	641 739	530 840	110 899	12	5	7
Macedonia, FYROM	449 491	393 233	56 258	8	4	4
Croatia	2 700	-	2 700	1	0	1
Regional Projects - Balkans	888 585	851 593	36 992	6	4	2
Hotspot level	288 012	248 331	39 681	3	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8 629 905</b>	<b>7 783 759</b>	<b>846 146</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>

**CEPF support to local vs. international organizations**

CEPF has awarded 81 grants to national organizations (35 large grants and 46 small), representing 76% of the projects. Yet, as the largest grants (often regional in scope) were mostly awarded to international NGOs, this group has received 39% of the total amount awarded. It has to be noted that, in most cases, the grants to international organizations comprised either sub-grants to national organizations, or included those as beneficiaries. Also, two thirds of the international NGOs receiving grants are "Mediterranean NGOs" based in Spain (1), Portugal (1), Greece (2), Slovenia (2), Italy (4) or France (2), therefore these grants strengthened regional cooperation. In general terms, the Mediterranean portfolio exceeded the CEPF global target of granting at least 50% of funds to local organizations.

**Figures 2 and 3. Distribution of Grants between National and International Organizations**



### 3) Portfolio Investment Description by Strategic Direction

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

37 grants were awarded under this Strategic direction (21 Large and 16 Small grants). The ecosystem profile did not consider the Middle East region under the priority for this direction – and only one grant was awarded to Lebanon after the mid-term assessment. Two thirds of the grants are concentrated in North Africa. Tunisia and Montenegro benefitted from 7 and 6 grants respectively – and unsurprisingly they are the countries where most impact was observed. The most challenging corridor was the Cyrenaican Peninsula in Libya – where the political and security situation, combined with low capacity of the new civil society, were limiting factors to achieving results.

Most proposals submitted under this strategic direction focused on diversification of tourism activities and generation of alternative livelihoods – in a nutshell, projects promoting eco-tourism activities. These kinds of activities fit well with the missions and capacities of the many Mediterranean CSOs. Although these projects demonstrated good results at the local level, the objective of “influencing integrated coastal zone management schemes” was harder to achieve. Nevertheless, significant progress was made in the Montenegrin portion of the Southeast Balkans corridor, with a group of grants to local and international NGOs to actively participate in consultation processes for local spatial planning exercises, which led to influence on decision-making. Some progress was also noticed in Tunisia, where civil society progressively got their voice heard in the management of coastal and marine protected areas, and worked more closely with governmental agencies to improve integration of biodiversity in plans and policies.

Recognizing the issue of capacity of local/national NGOs to fully participate in Integrated Coastal Zone Management, in particular in North Africa, CEPF supported a regional project in North Africa focusing on raising capacities in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), in parallel to exchanges of experience between organizations from the different countries supported through amendment to existing grants or small grants, with the objective of strengthening a small group of CSOs to pilot engagement in ICZM in the future.

#### **Strategic Direction 2: Sustainable Management of Water Catchments**

This strategic direction was the slowest to start, with only two projects being awarded before January 2014. This situation could be explained by the initial focus, in the ecosystem profile, on Turkey – whose government never endorsed CEPF strategy – and by the general lack of capacity of biodiversity CSOs to engage on large river basin management programs, while NGOs focusing on water issues had a limited appetite for biodiversity projects. Facing this situation, the team launched specific calls for proposals and proactively engaged with a wide range of organizations, putting several of them in contact, to generate proposals responding to this strategic direction. This strategy proved effective, as the final portfolio for this strategic direction consists of 25 projects. The Balkans took the lion's share of this strategic direction with two-thirds of the grants, which is consistent with the importance of this sub-region in terms of freshwater biodiversity. Seven projects were also implemented in Morocco, including four small grants.

The program in the Balkans was extremely successful, due to a more professional civil society, able to address complex political issues. This was the case on the trans-border Drin River Basin and on Skadar Lake, with several small and large grants awarded to diverse organizations. The challenge for CEPF was to engage with organizations that usually have a limited interest in biodiversity conservation. Under this strategic direction, CEPF supported NGOs working on agricultural development, reforestation, new technology, urban planning, communication, community participation and even human-rights and governance. Only a few projects were awarded to more "traditional" conservation organizations. This choice brought new experience, not only to CEPF but also to these organizations, often obliged to partner with scientific or

naturalist organizations. These new partnerships might well be an important legacy of CEPF for the future, and represent an interesting avenue for future CEPF investment.

**iii) Strategic Direction 3. Improve Conservation Status of Priority KBAs**

This strategic direction was, unsurprisingly, the most popular under every call for proposals. The large majority of grants were awarded under Investment Priority 3.1 (promotion of new protected areas and improvement of the management of existing ones), which is a traditional intervention for the conservation community. Projects under this investment priority accounted for a large part of the conservation results achieved during the investment phase, in particular in terms of creation of new protected areas.

The development of sustainable funding mechanisms (Investment Priority 3.2), on the other hand, received a lot less attention. This was certainly a reflection of the decline in interest into conservation trust funds after a positive trend in the first decade of the millennium. Supporting the creation of trust funds, as initially envisaged in the profile, requires a lot of time and an opportunistic approach, which was restricted by the geographical focus of the strategy. CEPF supported, in a limited way, the preparation of the Prespa-Orhid Nature Fund: a transboundary trust fund financed by MAVVA and the KfW. Some other activities were also supported, more in relation to payment for ecosystem services, which prepared the ground for actual financial mechanisms in the future.

Investment Priority 3.3, whose objective was to raise awareness about the importance of KBAs and influence decision-makers, was mainly covered through small grants, including activities such as production of field guides, specific studies and publications on threatened species, or communication programs on KBAs or the value of natural resources. These small grants appeared very complementary to other CEPF-supported activities, as they supported the identification of new sites, and provided useful data for management.

## V. Biodiversity Conservation Results

### 1) Impact on Threatened Species

#### Improving knowledge for species conservation

Conservation action needs a solid scientific basis to be efficient. Several CEPF grants resulted in increased knowledge of the biology of species, or improved data about the range and occurrence of threatened species; both are indispensable to conservation planning and action. Monitoring of species was also included in this section as a scientific management tool for conservation action.

For a limited number of species, CEPF supported scientific research on biology and/or ethology, mostly as components of wider conservation projects. CEPF also supported several projects for the assessment of a wide range of species, providing the information for further conservation planning and action.

A specific set of grants focused on freshwater biodiversity, such as an IUCN-led freshwater biodiversity assessment at regional level (co-funded by MAVA Foundation), a rapid assessment of freshwater biodiversity in the Skumbini River in Albania, from fish and insects to diatoms, and a karst freshwater species assessment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which included an assessment of underground species in 20 caves in the Balkans.

Additional work was also undertaken to assess plant diversity at national level, for example in Lebanon and Cape Verde, providing baseline data for conservation planning.

Several projects focused on monitoring waterbirds, including some that conducted annual or semi-annual censuses. Such activities were included as components of projects working on coastal wetlands and other important wetlands for migratory birds in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. In particular, Tour du Valat implemented a project for coordinating and standardizing waterbird monitoring methods in North Africa, working closely with local organizations.

Other projects focused on animal species, such as the first national assessment of bats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the monitoring of poorly understood endemic reptiles of the Desertas group of islands in Cape Verde, assessment of water birds in North Africa, and monitoring of loggerhead sea turtles in Tunisia and Cape Verde.

#### Species-focused conservation projects

Few projects in the Mediterranean Basin focused specifically on species conservation. No specific strategic direction was developed for this purpose, nor were any priority species selected as specific targets for investment. The following were the main projects that included a focus on the conservation of specific species:

- Biosfera I in Cape Verde implemented, with the support of Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves, a program for the long-term conservation of Razo lark (*Alauda razae*, CR), an endemic passerine bird, found only on Raso islet and among the most endangered birds in the world with a population of 200 to 500. Follow up actions are currently being funded by the MAVA Foundation and the GEF.
- In Tunisia, Association Marocaine pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature (AMEPN) developed with leisure fishermen a set of actions to preserve two native Moroccan trout: *Salmo akairos* (VU); and *Salmo trutta macrostigma*.
- In Cape Verde and Tunisia, organizations worked to protect loggerhead turtles (VU) by designing protocols to reduce the impact of turtle-watching tourism, and working with fishermen and local communities to reduce bycatch and poaching.

- Specific actions on Lake Skadar, led by Noé and their partners, provided great results for the conservation of Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*, VU). The small colony at Lake Skadar saw its numbers increase from 2016 onwards, with unprecedented reproductive success.
- In Lebanon, several rare plant species received increased protection through the creation of micro-reserves.

As illustrated by the above examples, site-level conservation action benefitted many threatened species, including virtually all of the threatened species located in the priority KBAs and protected areas supported by CEPF. Examples include: Algerian nuthatch (*Sitta ledanti*, EN), endemic to Djebel Babor; Lebanese cedar (*Cedrus libani*, VU); Nubian ibex (*Capra nubiana*, VU); and Orchid trout (*Salmo letnica*, DD), endemic to Lake Orhid. These species are expected to benefit from improved management of the sites where they are found.

## 2) Impact on conservation of Key Biodiversity Areas

The main focus of the CEPF strategy in the Mediterranean Basin was at the site level, either through the improvement of management and support to the creation of protected areas, or through working with nature users and landowners for the promotion of sustainable, biodiversity-friendly practices. CEPF has supported projects in 65 Key Biodiversity Areas, and monitored improved management of at least 51 of them, covering an estimated surface area of 2,177,000 ha.

### Creation and expansion of protected areas

The creation of protected areas is a lengthy process everywhere in the world, and the Mediterranean Basin is no exception. The results in terms of creation and/or expansion of protected areas can therefore be considered good, with eight new protected areas and one expansion, covering 27,651 ha, all of them in Lebanon and Jordan. Furthermore, seven other sites are currently in the process of being declared and are expected to be gazetted in 2018 or later, for an estimated additional surface area of 116,000 ha. Overall, it is therefore expected that CEPF will have helped the creation of about 140,000 ha of new protected areas in the Mediterranean Basin under the first phase of investment.

The list of the proclaimed protected areas and expected protected area is provided in the Tables 7 and 8.

**Table 7. New Protected Areas Created with Support from CEPF-funded Projects**

Country	Site Name	Surface area (ha)
Lebanon	Hima Al Fekha	5,913
Lebanon	Ehmej micro-reserve	52
Jordan	Tal ar Arbeen special conservation area (Jordan River)	18
Jordan	Sweimeh Nature Park	18
Lebanon	Metropolitan Geawargios Haddad Natural Reserve	100
Lebanon	Anjar micro-reserve	40
Lebanon	Qaytouli-Roum	300
Jordan	Mujib (expansion)	21,200
<b>Total</b>		<b>27,651</b>



**Table 8. New Protected Areas Expected (Preparatory Actions Supported by CEPF)**

Country	Site Name	Surface area (ha)
Morocco	Sidi Bou Areg No-Fish Zone	2,000
Tunisia	Kuriat Islands (Gulf of Gabès Marine Protected Area)	80,000
Algeria	Babor National Park	30,000
Montenegro	Porto Palermo	2,000
Montenegro	Ulcinj	1,500
Montenegro	Sasko Lake	600
Lebanon	Baskinta micro-reserve	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>116,031</b>

Note: Site names are not official, and number of ha is an estimate.

In addition to the number and size of protected areas, CEPF has supported the development of new models for protection of important sites:

- The concept of micro-reserves has been used for the first time in Lebanon, based on agreements with local authorities on communal lands (Ehmej), or with the church (Sarada, declared as "Metropolitan Geawargios Haddad Natural Reserve") or private landowners (Baskinta). Although small in size, these sites are of important biodiversity value and are well adapted to the preservation of micro-endemic or rare plants. A first micro-reserve (Ehmej) was officially created and recognized by the Lebanese Ministry for Environment in 2015, setting up a precedent for scaling up the approach in the newly identified Important Plant Areas.
- Also in Lebanon, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon has adapted the traditional concept of *Hima*: a system of land and water management. This alternative, community-managed protected area concept could potentially be replicated in many other places in the Mediterranean Basin.
- Qaytouli-Roum in Lebanon is the first "sustainable hunting area" set up in the country. The area is managed by local government with support from hunters and nature conservationists.
- In the next few months, the Kuriat Islands Marine Protected Area in Tunisia is expected to become the first co-managed protected area in the country, closely involving a CSO (Notre Grand Bleu) with the everyday management of the site: a situation that would have been completely impossible only a couple of years ago.

These new models, all pushing for multi-stakeholder approaches, demonstrate how civil society can play a crucial role, alongside governmental authorities, in the management of protected areas in the region.

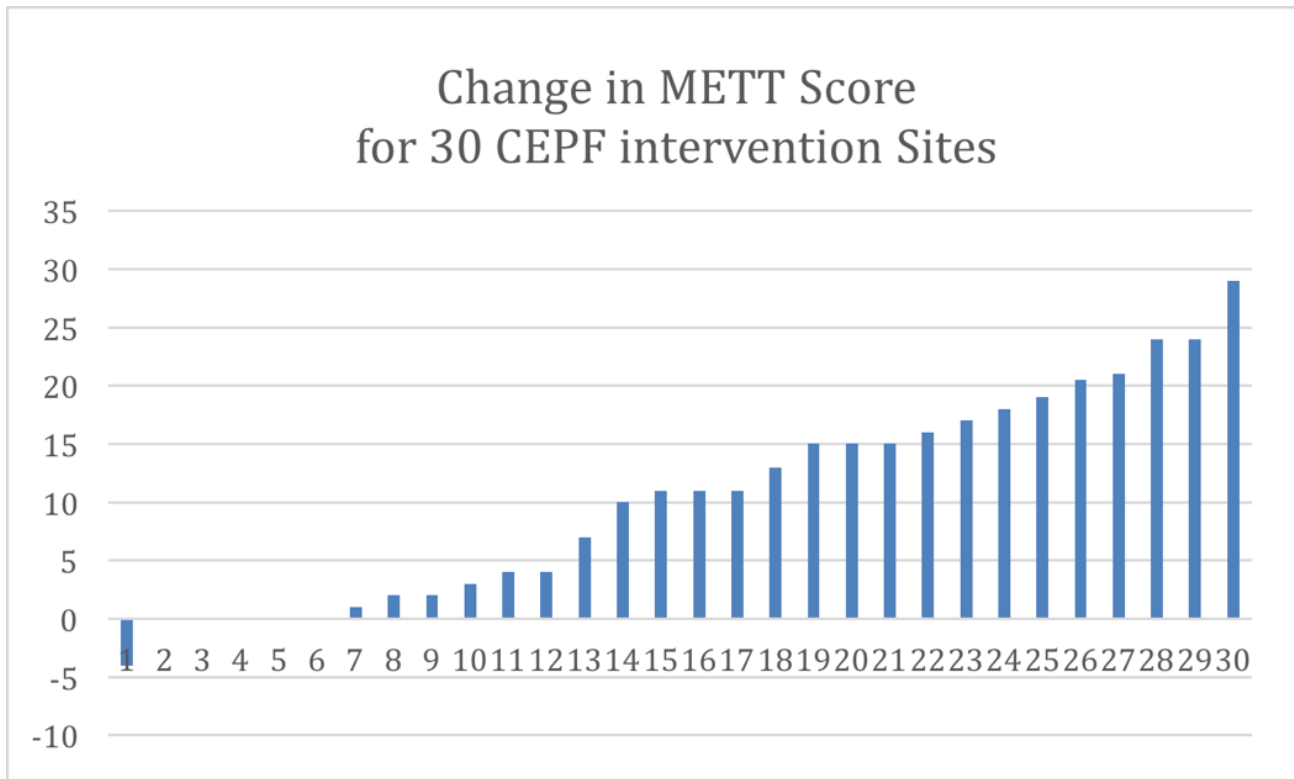
### Improved management of Key Biodiversity Areas

Thus far, CEPF has supported actions in 66 sites in the Mediterranean Basin. For 54 of them, the actions have resulted in strengthened management or protection. In the remaining 12 sites, either activities have not yet demonstrated impact on the management of the site, or activities were limited in size and scope and were not expected to have a direct impact on site management (e.g., scientific study, awareness-raising activities, etc.).

Among the 66 Key Biodiversity Areas that have benefitted from CEPF support, 31 are — at least partially, and for some recently (see above, New Protected Areas created) — under protection status. In such cases, CEPF asked the grantees to monitor the evolution of the management of the protected area using the METT (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) – a tool designed, under the coordination of WWF, for the Global Environment Facility, to monitor effectiveness of protected area management. Two METTs have also been collected for areas which are not yet protected (as a monitoring tool used in the process of protection), and in three instances, METTs were not collected for existing protected area, for instance where a project only worked in a small part of a protected area. Overall, 30 baseline and final METTs were collected, providing for

a good overview of the evolution of management effectiveness in 30 areas under protection or partial protection.

**Figure 2. Net Change in METT Scores for Protected Areas over the Period of CEPF Support**



The main findings of the METT analysis were:

- 80% of the protected areas monitored saw an increase in their METT Score, indicating improvement in site management (some improvements appeared almost exclusively attributable to CEPF support, while others were the result of joint actions to which CEPF only contributed).
- Only one site (Butrinti NP in Albania) saw its score decrease, while five had a stable score.
- About half of the protected areas benefitting from CEPF investment (see Figure 4) saw an increase of their METT score by more than 10 points. Five protected areas saw an increase of more than 20 points, demonstrating a real boost in terms of their management effectiveness.
- The average METT score, at the end of the investment period, was 45 points. This is still a quite low score, demonstrating the need for additional support.
- The greatest impact was noted for smaller sites and new protected areas.

Overall, the surface area of KBAs under protection that saw an improvement of their management was estimated at 1,114,000 ha. The list of these protected areas is provided in Table 9.

CEPF also supported many projects in unprotected areas within KBAs, either to prepare for future protection (see section 2.1) or, more often, to work with local communities to maintain or improve management practices resulting in better protection of biodiversity. This work resulted in improved management of Key Biodiversity Areas — working on productive land or future protected areas — on a surface area estimated at close to 690,000 ha. Altogether, the estimated area of Key Biodiversity Areas with improved management is 2,177,000 ha.

**Table 9. Protected Areas Supported by CEPF-funded Projects and METT Scores**

Country	Site Name	Hectares with strengthened management (in relation to CEPF investment)	Baseline METT score	year	Final METT score	year	Difference in METT Score
Albania	Butrinti National Park*	9 400	58	2013	54	2017	-4
Albania	Karaburun-Sazan National Park	10 373	24	2013	24	2017	0
Albania	Karavasta lagoon	22 230	41	2015	41	2017	0
Albania	Lalzi bay	800	17	2015	18	2017	1
Albania	Narte-Vjose Landscape park	37 900	29	2013	31	2017	2
Albania	Lake Shkodra (Lake Skadar)	27 571	30	2015	34	2017	4
Albania	Velipoja and surrounding area	1 500	23	2015	34	2017	11
Albania	Kune Vain lagoon	2 188	27	2015	38	2017	11
Albania	Patoku lagoon	5 500	23	2014	38	2017	15
Algeria	Parc National du Djurdjura	18 500	52	2013	56	2015	4
Algeria	El Kala National Park**		35	2015	42	2017	7
Algeria	Djebel Babor	23 564	5	2014	22	2017	17
Bosnia and	Hutovo blato	7 411	39	2013	52	2017	13
Cape Verde	Ilheu Raso	700	28	2013	52	2016	24
Cape Verde	Santa Luzia Island	3 500	28	2013	52	2016	24
FYR Macedonia	Dojran Lake	2 729	26	2014	26	2017	0
FYR Macedonia	Jablanica Mountain	1 370	24	2014	26	2016	2
Jordan	Mujib	656 367	58	2013	69	2015	11
Lebanon	Al Chouf Cedars Nature Reserve	16 100	67	2013	77	2015	10
Lebanon	Ehmej	62	51	2015	67	2017	16
Lebanon	Sarada	100	49	2015	67	2017	18
Lebanon	Western Anti Lebanon Mountains	5 913	40	2014	59	2015	19
Lebanon	Anjar	40	33	2014	53,5	2016	20,5
Montenegro	Lake Skadar	40 000	46	2013	61	2017	15
Morocco	Parc National de Toubkal	100 000	40	2013	40	2016	0
Morocco	Parc National Haut Atlas		36	2013	39	2016	3
Morocco	Parc Naturel d'Ifrane	125 000	37	2013	52	2016	15
Tunisia	Ichkeul	279 503	54	2013	54	2015	0
Tunisia	Sidi Mechig Beaches	10 122	25	2014	46	2016	21
Tunisia	Kuriat Island	80 000	20	2015	49	2017	29
	TOTAL	1 488 443					

\* For Butrinti, even though the global score of the protected area decreased, some positive impacts in terms of management were observed with civil society involvement.

\*\* for El Kala and Haut Atlas Oriental protected areas, the CEPF actions were limited in scope and were not assessed as having a direct effect on management effectiveness. The number of hectares was therefore not counted under CEPF achievements.

### 3) Improved management of biodiversity in productive landscapes

CEPF also tracks the impact of projects on strengthened management of biodiversity in productive landscapes. Working in productive landscapes is considered a key element for conservation, even more so in the Mediterranean Basin, where biodiversity has evolved alongside human land-use practices for several thousand years, to the extent that many of the most threatened terrestrial species are dependent on habitats that are maintained through continuing intervention for agriculture, seasonal grazing or harvesting of wild products. In the Mediterranean Basin, considering this interrelation between nature and human practices, many protected areas are also places where productive activities take place, sometimes even at a large scale. Therefore, it is important to note that the figures provided for "strengthened management of biodiversity in productive landscapes" should not be added to the ones for "strengthened management of Key Biodiversity Areas," as in most cases there is a large overlap.

CEPF supported a wide range of activities related to sustainable use of natural resources and improved agricultural or fishing practices in 28 sites, among which 24 are situated inside or in the direct vicinity of KBAs. The activities varied substantially from one site to the other and so did the impact on biodiversity, for which no standard measurement can be applied. Overall, the surface area of productive land where changes in productive practices with positive impact on biodiversity were noted was estimated at 1,485,000 ha.

## VI. Strengthening Civil Society Results

### 1) Type of organizations supported

CEPF supported 91 organizations through 108 projects during the first phase.

- 60% of grants by value were awarded to local organizations from eligible hotspot countries.
- Among the 40% of funds that were awarded to “international organizations”, the majority was directed to regional organizations in the Mediterranean Basin, national organizations from EU member countries within the Mediterranean Basin (i.e., Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, etc.), or Mediterranean programs of international NGOs (i.e., IUCN, WWF, etc.). In many cases, international organizations worked closely with national and local partners to implement projects.

The vast majority of projects were implemented with environmental CSOs. A few projects involved local community organizations (cooperatives, fishermen’s associations), but generally as local partners or subgrantees, and only in a few cases as small grantees (in Algeria and Morocco). Work with private sector remained limited, with only a few projects, working mostly with small local enterprises and/or family businesses.

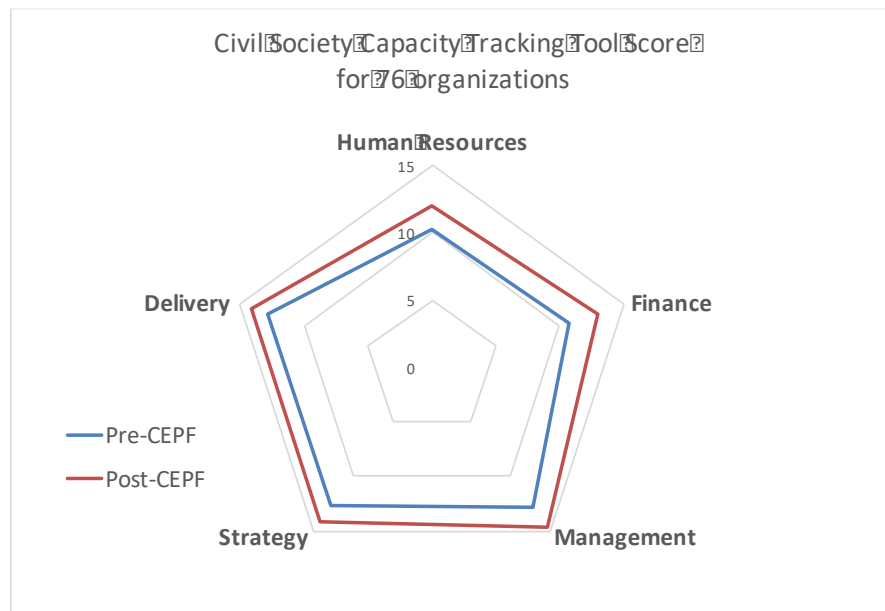
### 2) Evaluation of CEPF impact on civil society capacity

CEPF monitors the impact of its investments on the organizational capacity of CSOs by means of the Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT): a self-assessment tool that each local organization fills up at beginning and end of the period of CEPF support. The CSTT is organized around 5 sections: Human Resources, Finances, Management, Strategy and Delivery. Initial and Final CSTTs were collected for 76 organizations.

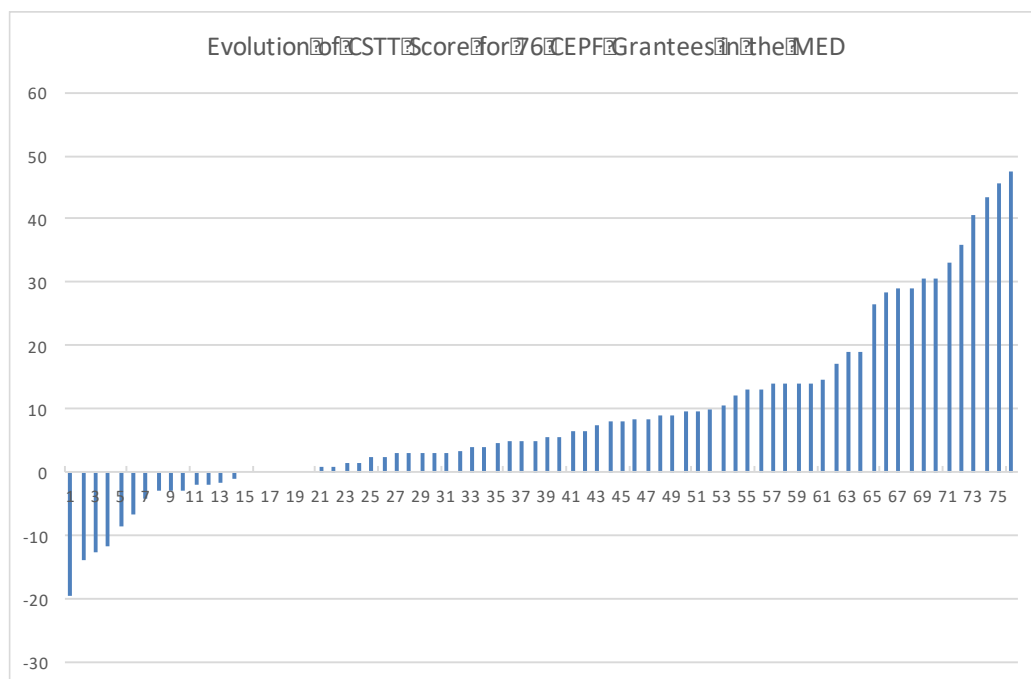
The analysis of the tool shows that 72% of organizations increased their CSTT score. This figure covers a diversity of situations, which could be summarized with three main categories.

- 5 organizations (6%) saw their score decrease significantly (by more than 5%)
- 29 organizations (38%) saw their score remain stable (8 with a limited decrease, below 5%, 15 with a limited increase, below 5%)
- Finally, 41 organizations (56%) saw a significant increase in their capacity, as measured by the CSTT – with even 12 of them (16%) seeing a huge increase of over 25% in their score.

**Figure 3. Civil Society Tracking Tool, Variation of Score by Capacity Category**



**Figure 4. Net Change in Civil Society Tracking Tool Scores of CEPF Grantees over the Period of Support**



The organizations that saw their score decrease could be classified into two types:

- Large organizations (generally for which CEPF funding represent only a portion of the budget), which faced some internal difficulties (for instance due to fundraising or internal governance). This is the case for some international organizations (Centro Euro-Mediterranei from Italy, Living Med from Spain) or large national ones (Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan);
- Small to very small organizations, often working in difficult environments or relying on a limited number of key people (e.g. Libyan Society for Birds or Association des Enseignants en Sciences of Morocco). This type of organization is susceptible to high variation of their score whenever their situation changes.

Overall, the number of organizations experiencing a reduction of their capacities remained limited. This is part of the normal "life cycle" of CSOs.

Among the "stable" organizations, a significant portion was comprised of large organizations, which generally start with a high score, and do not have a lot of room for improvement. The average baseline score of organizations in this category was 70.5 (10 points over the average in the region). The other, small portion (5 organizations) consisted of small organizations which had limited support from CEPF (small grantees and subgrantee/ partner).

Thus CEPF had an important impact on a large number of organizations, which saw an important increase in capacity. The group of organizations (16%) which saw their capacities increased by more than 25% (following the CSTT score), consist mostly of "nascent", originally unprofessional organizations - CEPF was very much their first international partner. Their baseline score was on average 27, with some organizations as low as 4 points. Some of them are now taking a growing role in their countries, such as PPNEA and ASPM in Albania, which played an important role in advocating for a hunting ban and monitoring illegal activities, MANS (Network for Affirmation of NGO Sector) in Montenegro, or Nase Ptice in Bosnia.

Some organizations, although not necessarily in that category in terms of score variation, have really emerged with CEPF support in the last few years, and have become among some of the important NGOs in their respective countries, such as:

- Notre Grand Bleu: this organization, created by a diving enthusiast, was just set up when CEPF started to support. Funding was provisioned for capacity enhancement. The organization, through several amendments, implemented a project with a final budget of close to \$200,000. It achieved the objective of supporting the creation of the Kuriat MPA, which is expected to become the first protected area co-managed between government and civil society in Tunisia, and received funding from important donors (i.e., MAVA, M2PA initiative, etc.).
- Biosfera II: this organization was supported initially by a subgrant through the Portuguese BirdLife Partner, then through a small grant, largely on capacity building. From a small, family organization, Biosfera worked on its communication, governance, administrative and financial management. The organization is now one of the recognized conservation organizations in Cape Verde, partners with the government for the management of the largest MPA of the country. It received follow-up funding from MAVA and the GEF to implement action plans prepared with CEPF support.
- Université Saint Joseph: with CEPF support, the department of botanic science of the university was able to engage in field conservation, and set up the model for micro-reserve for plants in the country.
- PPNEA and ASPMB, in Albania, are gradually becoming among the most recognized conservation organizations of their countries, and spearheaded a coalition of CSOs working with government on issues such as hunting or protected areas management.

### 3) Networking and Partnership Building

Promotion of collaborative action was at the core of CEPF approach in the region over the five years of implementation. This approach could be declined in three major lines of action:

- Supporting the creation or strengthening of networks for conservation.
- Supporting collaborative approaches between organizations at site level.
- Supporting exchange of experience and mentoring between NGOs of the region.

#### **Supporting the creation or strengthening of networks and partnerships for conservation**

CEPF supported the creation of eight official networks, and supported three additional, already created networks. The networks are diverse, from research and exchange of experience to coordination of action at the site level. The networks facilitated collaboration and exchange of experience among conservation organizations at the national level, or on specific issues (integrated coastal zone management, illegal hunting, river basin management, etc.). The list of the networks is provided in Table 10.

Several "informal" networks were also supported by CEPF, for instance for the preservation of Ulcinj Salina in Montenegro, the monitoring of the hunting ban in Albania, and the promotion of coastal bird-watching and ecotourism in Tunisia.

#### **Supporting collaborative approaches between organizations at site level**

The CEPF program officers in each sub-region were instrumental at strengthening collaborative action at the local level. Their expertise in conservation and knowledge of the civil society community allowed them to play a role of facilitator, to connect people and organizations and support concerted action. In many cases, CEPF linked local NGOs with international NGOs or experts, providing "on the ground" capacity building. CEPF's different funding modalities, large grants, small grants and sub-grants (grants to local organization included in a larger grant), meant that CEPF was ideally placed to foster partnerships for conservation.

Overall, in the 66 Key Biodiversity Areas where CEPF supported action, 31 sites (47%) benefitted from more than one project: typically a large grant and one or more small grants.

**Table 10. Networks Created or Strengthened with CEPF Support**

Name of Network	Date Created	Country	Objective	Role of CEPF
Act4Drin Alliance	2016	Albania, FYROM, Greece, Kosovo, and Montenegro	Coordination of NGO working on protection of Drin River ecosystem and advocating for integrated river basin management	Support creation
Act4Drin Young Ambassadors	2016	Albania, FYROM, Greece, and Montenegro	Network of young conservationists promoting the protection of freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin.	Support creation
Fédération Marocaine de pêche de Loisir (FMPL)	2014	Morocco	Organization of leisure fishing in Morocco/ Contribution to law enforcement and definition of fishing regulations, promotion of ecotourism	Support creation
Réseau bleu et vert RBV	2016	Tunisia	Experience sharing and advocacy for improved management of coastal zones	Support creation
Transboundary Alliance for Conservation of Subterranean Fauna	2016	Montenegro, Slovenia, Italy and Albania	Exchange of experience and capacity building on inventories and research on cave biodiversity, advocacy and awareness raising for improved preservation of subterranean ecosystems.	Support creation
Green Vision	2016	Albania	Group of local environmental associations established in Vlora to engage local community on environmental issues and coordinate civil society activities on nature protection.	Support creation
Comité local d'appui à la gestion de l'AMCP de Kuriat	2014	Tunisia	Evaluation and monitoring of the management of Kuriat MPA. Composed of private sector, governmental institutions, local governments, NGOs etc.	Support creation
Friends of UNESCO -	2016	Macedonia	Network of Members of the Macedonian Parliament supporting UNESCO protection of Ohrid lake	Support Creation
Hunting Society of Herceg Bosna	2016	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Control of illegal Hunting and education of hunters in the area of Mostarsko blato	Strengthen
Nature Trust Alliance (NTA)	2016	Albania, FYR of Macedonia, Greece, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia	Joint back office services between Prespa & Ohrid Nature Trust and Caucasus Nature Trust, reducing operating costs and enhancing sharing best practices in conservation finance.	Strengthen
Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association	2014	Morocco	Network of professionals and practitioners in the fields of plant conservation and local livelihoods. Exchange of best practices, awareness raising, and support to other structure working with Amazigh communities	Strengthen
Moroccan Plants and Livelihoods Specialist Group	2013	Morocco	Platform for governmental and non-governmental institutions, individuals and organizations interested in plant conservation and local livelihoods. Sub-group of the IUCN Mediterranean Plants Specialist Group.	Strengthen

A great example of such alliance-building activity took place at Lake Skadar KBA, on the Montenegro-Albania border. 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 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 joint proposals involving most of the local organizations and institutions, resulting in good conservation results. Similar synergy happened in the same country with a coordinate set of action for integrated coastal management of the region of Ulcinj. Another example was reported from Tunisia, where local organizations benefitted from



support from several CEPF-funded projects (with Association des Amis des Oiseaux, IUCN, Tour du Valat, and Association Tunisienne des Ingenieurs Agronomes) and are now getting organized as a network, to defend the coastal wetlands and work with local governments and communities.

Such synergies happened in places where CEPF investment was focused on a relatively small area. In spite of very good individual projects, there was less collaboration/coordination in Morocco, where the Atlas Mountains priority corridor stretches over 600 km and encompasses 26 KBAs. Investments in Cape Verde or Jordan were also limited in scope, with a few projects in each country, which limited the possibilities of mutually supportive initiatives.

### **Exchange of Experience and Mentoring**

Mentoring of recently established, smaller organizations by stronger, longer-established organizations proved a very successful model for strengthening organizational capacities, as was seen in Tunisia, Morocco, Cape Verde and the Balkans. In addition, the RIT facilitated peer-to-peer exchanges on specific practices, rooted in on-the-ground experience, which were recognized by grantees as an invaluable way to build their capacities.

The exchanges were particularly active between the Middle East and North Africa sub-regions, which share the same language. As an example, a study tour for Tunisian, Moroccan and Algerian organizations and officials was organized with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan, where the participants were introduced to the model of protected Area's management with conservation and with local communities involvement. CEPF investment also facilitated a new partnership between Libyan and Jordanian grantees through an exchange visit. The Libyan NGOs (LWT and Oxygen) continue maintaining regular contacts with the three organizations in Jordan to exchange views and seek guidance on conservation actions. In 2016, members of local association Notre Grand Bleu in Tunisia participated to an exchange visit to Cape Verde, to learn from the experience of Biosphera 1 and Maio Biodiversity Foundation in monitoring and conservation of marine turtles, bringing back new methods to their country.

## VII. Human Well-Being Results

### 1) Communities benefitting

The CEPF approach in the Mediterranean Basin has been focused largely on working with communities at the site level, associating them with conservation work and supporting livelihood or economic activities favorable to biodiversity conservation. Overall, 50 projects (48%) included a strong community-based approach.

The community-based conservation actions have been mostly with farmers and pastoralists, in particular in North Africa and the Middle-East. Projects in Morocco and Jordan have worked with local communities to reduce overgrazing. In Jordan, the United Society for Developing Water Resources and Environment (USDWE) worked on water-efficient production of "green fodder" to limit overgrazing in Mujib Reserve during the dry season. In Lebanon, the development of new protected areas under the *Hima* traditional system secured access to natural water resources and grassland for local shepherds.

Organizations in coastal areas also worked with fishermen, such as association AGIR in Morocco, which worked with fishing communities to improve fishing practices, increase revenues while respecting no-catch zones to replenish fish stocks. Notre Grand Bleu in Tunisia partnered with local fishermen of Monastir to introduce fishing techniques limiting by-catch (mainly of sea turtles) and reducing impact on seagrass bed ecosystems. Noé reached an agreement with fishermen of Lake Skadar in Montenegro to design no-go zones and reduce the disturbance of pelicans during the nesting season. The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon, through an "emergency" small grant, initiated an awareness raising campaign with fishermen on the importance of Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus* - CR), at a time when the first group was observed in the country for many years.

Several CEPF projects worked for the maintenance of ecosystem services, benefitting local communities, with a focus on water resources as a key element in water-stressed Mediterranean Basin. In Albania, Albaforest worked with local communities on developing anti-erosion models based on reforestation and improved land-use management, to preserve the Drin river basin. Also in Albania, the Women at Work Initiative in a coastal area with scarce and polluted water sources worked with local women to clean and re-activate water springs in ways that benefitted the local community and biodiversity of the area. In Tunisia, local groups engaged with municipality government to preserve and value coastal wetlands that provide multiple ecosystem services. In Morocco, the Global Diversity Foundation worked with local communities on improved water management systems, together with the production of high added value products based on medicinal plants. Overall, 59 communities benefitted from CEPF-supported projects, and eight specific income generation activities were implemented. In addition, 14 sustainable water management practices were demonstrated.

Several grants included activities with private sector stakeholders: a large proportion of them in relation with eco-tourism. INCA, a leading NGO in Albania, supported micro-projects to initiate small-scale ecotourism businesses in the Karaburun area (e.g., boat tours, diving, etc.) in an attempt to change the public perception of tourism. Green Home in Montenegro set up a shop for local natural products. PPNEA in Albania involved 10 private owners in developing guesthouses and involved local women in preparing and selling local culinary products to day-visitors to Butrint National Park. In Lebanon, Al Shouf Reserve worked on developing handicrafts with women, to diversify their sources of income and lower pressure on cedar forests.

Community-based approaches were also at the core of all projects working on creation of or management support to protected areas, with the idea to work "with" and not "against" local communities. In general,

this required an extensive consultation process, necessary to secure the understanding and support of local communities, as a key element of the long-term sustainability of protected area management.

The monitoring system for tracking direct benefits to communities will need to be strengthened in the next phase of CEPF investment in the hotspot, in particular to disaggregate data between men and women.

Based on data presented by the grantees in their final reports:

- 201 people benefitted from a job in relation to tourism (estimated 45% women).
- 199 people created a small business (e.g., agricultural products, restaurants, etc.) (estimated 32% women).
- 4,000 people benefitted from increased revenue from non-timber products (estimated 50% women).
- 8,140 people benefitted from increased revenue from improved management of natural resources (e.g., shepherds, fishermen, etc.) (estimated 45% women).

## 2) Gender

While including a gender-sensitive approach was an important element of the CEPF investment program, being mainstreamed into individual projects, a systematic monitoring system was designed by CEPF only in 2016 and did not apply for the first implementation phase in the Mediterranean Basin. Depending on particular projects, specific activities were implemented to support active participation of women in decision-making and ensuring that both women and men benefitted from livelihood activities and access to natural resources, as exemplified by the projects below.

In Algeria, a small grant was awarded to Association des Femmes Rurales de Sekikda to prepare an ecotourism trail involving local householders (especially housewives) and providing a market for local handicraft products. In the same country, a local organization undertaking the preliminary work for the creation of a protected area in Babor included a gender analysis study, highlighting the important role played by women in agriculture and advocating for their empowerment and involvement in protected area management to achieve equal opportunities in terms of distribution and use of resources.

In Albania, a women's association, The Women at Work Initiative (TWAWI), benefitted from a small grant for a project to restore and protect freshwater ecosystems in Lalzi Bay. Under the project *Land of Eagles and Castles*, focused on habitat preservation and ecotourism, Association PPNEA achieved great results through cooperation with local women's cooperatives in the Ksamil region around Butrint National Park, supporting the establishment of the production chain, branding and organizing the market for local traditional food products. The profit from these activities benefitted local women and provided alternative livelihoods for themselves and their families.

As part of a project with the Royal Society for Conservation of Nature in Jordan, socio-economic activities were identified to support income generating schemes for local women living around Mujib Biosphere Reserve. An agreement was signed with Faqou Women's Cooperative to raise their economic status as well as provide them with training on environmental friendly practices. Local women were trained in production of silver handicrafts, medicinal plants production and sandblasting, then they were equipped with necessary tools and equipment to start the scheme following drafting a marketing strategy. Eighteen women were engaged in the income-generating scheme, and are now running small-scale businesses. This led to enhancement of their livelihoods through sustainable practices.

## VIII. Enabling Conditions Results

### 1) Improving Knowledge for Conservation Planning

As mentioned in section V, CEPF supported several assessments with the objective to support conservation planning in the long run. The most important results in this regard were:

- Assessment of freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas for the Mediterranean Basin (IUCN).
- Assessment of Important Plant Areas in Lebanon.
- Assessment of Important Plant Areas in Cape Verde.
- Inventory and assessment of bat populations in Bosnia and Hercegovina.
- Inventory and assessment of underground biodiversity in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro.

Many additional studies and inventories were undertaken at the site level, in particular in the context of design (or redesign) of management plans, or creation of new protected areas.

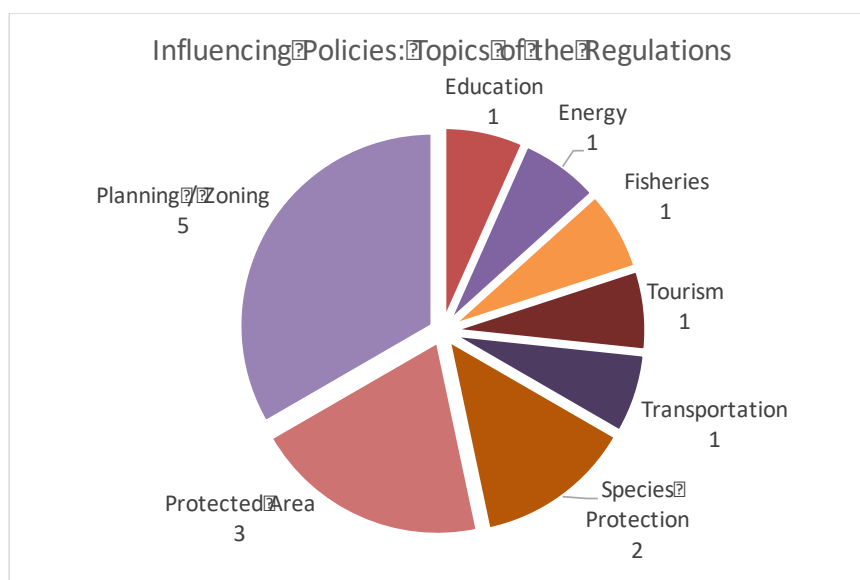
An interesting example of the nexus between science and policy is the study on the distribution of olm (*Proteus anguinus* - VU), an enigmatic aquatic cave salamander, implemented by Slovenia organization štvo Za Jamsko Biologijo. Through DNA sampling of water from the underground river system in the karstic systems of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, and Albania, the grantee was able to demonstrate the occurrence of the species in caves that had never been explored before or are not accessible. The known range of the species was extended, and proof of its presence in Montenegro, where it had never been observed before, was established. This discovery implies a legal responsibility of the Montenegrin authorities for the preservation of this globally threatened species. The research by the organization also suggested that olms could belong to not one but several species (evolutionary convergence making the different species similar in shape), with consequences for their conservation status. If confirmed, this taxonomic change would significantly impact conservation planning.

### 2) Influencing Policies for Biodiversity Mainstreaming

Several organizations supported by CEPF worked towards the improvement of policies in favor of biodiversity conservation in the region, demonstrating the important role of civil society in influencing decision-making. The achievement of these objectives followed different approach, sometimes combined in one project. CSOs gathered data and evidence for policy makers, participated in consultation with alternative propositions, organized citizen consultations, raised awareness of the population to build a constituency in favor or against some regulations, and organized visits and exchanges for parliamentarians, among other activities. Many avenues to mainstream biodiversity considerations into decision making were explored, depending on the local political context, during the five years of CEPF investment, leading to 15 laws or regulations being officially declared, on eight main topics (see Table 11). Zoning and planning issues were the most prominent, and, together with protected areas, these accounted for more than half of the new regulations (eight laws or regulations passed). This is a reflection of the focus on integrated river basin management and integrated coastal zone management in the CEPF strategy.

Apart from the laws and regulations that were passed, the influence of civil society can also be seen by the models or pilots developed, when they are accepted and reproduced by governments. The CEPF investment was in particular successful in Lebanon, where NGO supported by CEPF established the first micro-reserve for plants, established the first sustainable hunting area, and promoted the traditional *Hima* system for natural resources management. These models, developed in concert with governments or local governments, are now being reproduced in other areas, with a welcome multiplier effect.

**Figure 5. Policies and Regulations Influenced: Distribution by Topic**



**Table 11. List of Policies and Regulations Influenced by CEPF grantees**

Title of the Policy	Scope	Topic	Country	Date of Declaration	Summary of Expected Impact
Note Circulaire du 11 Juillet 2014 du Directeur d'Académie du Ministère de l'Education Nationale	Regional/Local policy	Education	Morocco	11/07/2014	Inclusion of environmental education and protection of rivers and freshwater bodies in the curriculum of all primary and secondary school pupils in rural areas of the Middle-Atlas
Complementary decision to the Environmental permit	Regional/Local policy	Energy	Bosnia & Hercegovina	08/10/2015	Inclusion of provision for the restoration of the wetlands of Nature Park Hutovo Blato as part of renewal of the environmental permit for existing hydropower plant
National strategy for integrated management of coastal areas (Conclusion of the Government of Montenegro N. 08-1486)	National Policy	Planning/Zoning	Montenegro	02/07/2015	Strategy for ICZM, including priorities, goals, measures to be integrated in the National Coastal Area Management Plan and Coastal Zone Spatial Plan. Includes priorities and targets for biodiversity conservation.
Spatial plan of Ulcinj Municipality ( <i>Prostorno-urbanisticki plan Opstine Ulcinj do 2020</i> )	Regional/Local policy	Planning/Zoning	Montenegro	16/02/2017	Plan includes several provisions for improved conservation of natural sites, and includes Ulcinj Salina as a protected area within local urban planning documents
Land Use Master Plan for Mujib Basin	Regional policy	Planning/Zoning	Jordan	nov-15	Extension of the Mujib protected areas, definition of land use plan for the entire Mujib Basin (include outside of Protected Area) which integrates natural areas, with objective to preserve the water resources.

Title of the Policy	Scope	Topic	Country	Date of Declaration	Summary of Expected Impact
Decision by Anjar Municipality to enforce Sustainable Hunting Regulation on Hunting Grounds	Local	Species Protection	Lebanon	nov-15	Decision to improve hunting practices, and forbid unsustainable hunting practices (number of birds killed, species, hunting season etc.)
Municipal decree, declaring all the lands of the village of el-Fekha as Hima protected area.	Local	Protected Areas	Lebanon	2015	Regulation of land use and natural resource management (water, pasture, etc.) with objective to enhance sustainable use and preserve local natural resources for local communities.
Municipal decree, for the application of national land use legislation (Art. 84, Art. 80, "Code de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Urbanisme" )	Local	Planning/Zoning	Tunisia	2016	Impose strict application of the urban planning regulation, and forbid in particular all construction in the vicinity of wetlands of Ghar El Melh
Official Journal 2016 - N. 115, # 61/2016, Governmental decree on hunting ban	National	Species Protection	Albania	09/07/2016	Extend hunting ban for 5 additional years, with objective to achieve recovery of the population of some species, until new hunting regulation approved and in place.
Annual fishing regulations approved by the High Commissioner for the season 2015/2016	National	Fisheries	Morocco	mars-15	Integration of the Federation de Pêche (FMPL) in the Comité National de la Pêche, the highest institutional committee for planning and organization of fishing practices. The Federation, participate in the planning for annual regulations on fishing,
Convention de cogestion de l'aire marine protégée des Iles Kuriats par l'Agence de Protection et d'Aménagement du Littoral (APAL)	National	Protected Areas	Tunisia	December 2015	Notre Grand Bleu, a local NGO, is declared co-manager of the Marine protected area, with APAL agency. It's the first co-management of a protected area with a CSO in Tunisia.
Arrêté du Ministère des Affaires Locales et de l'Environnement du 28 avril 2017 portant création du Conseil National des Aires Marines et Côtières Protégées	National	Protected Areas	Tunisia	28 avril 2017	The arrêté officially includes CSOs in the Tunisian « National Council for Coastal and Marine Protected Areas", giving a voice to civil society in marine/coastal protected area management.
Order of the Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries related to hunting regulation (2014/2015 - renewed for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017)	National	Tourism	Tunisia	September /2014	Integration of strict hunting regulation for 5 KBA on the Tunisian coastline (CEPF intervention sites)

Title of the Policy	Scope	Topic	Country	Date of Declaration	Summary of Expected Impact
Decision of the Municipality of Orhid 09-5611/11 on territorial planning	National	Planning/Zoning	Macedonia	27/04/2017	Inclusion of the Studenchiste marsh (an important wetland) as an area to be preserved from urbanization.
Decision of the Macedonian Parliament in its 34 <sup>th</sup> session (31/10/2017 - point 5)	National	Transportation	Macedonia	31/10/2017	Decision to cancel funding initially secured in the budget for an express road expected to go across National Park.

### 3) Influencing investment and leveraging

The ecosystem profile was widely distributed and was used by several donors and governmental agencies as a reference document. For example, the EU Delegation in Albania used the KBA definition to define a list of priority sites for its program to support environmental civil society in the country. The profile was also considered as a basis for the Natura2000 process in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The MAVA Foundation became a regional donor to the CEPF Mediterranean program in 2014, providing an additional \$1.129 million to CEPF's investment under Strategic Direction 1 on coastal management. A strong collaboration was established with the foundation, which agreed to support the update of the ecosystem profile, together with the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation. CEPF also participated in the Donor Round Table for the Mediterranean: an informal group of donors working with civil society in the region. In parallel, CEPF helped grantees to secured funding from GETF (Coca Cola Foundation) and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, to support follow-on projects, to the value at least \$600,000. CEPF also took part in preparation and implementation of the North Africa PPI, implemented by IUCN and funded by FFEM/MAVA. CEPF's role was to help coordinate support to small, local organizations.

## IX. Lessons Learned

Lessons learned were monitored throughout the implementation of the first phase of CEPF investment. A key exercise was the Mid-term Assessment<sup>3</sup>, which was conducted in 2015 and involved the following activities:

- National assessments, undertaken in all 12 eligible countries in the Mediterranean Basin through in-country meetings. A total of 186 people participated in these meetings, including CEPF grantees, and local and national government representatives.
- An online survey, in English, French, Arabic and Serbo-Croatian, sent to all CEPF grantees and unsuccessful applicants, to which 116 responses were recorded.
- A regional workshop, held in Montenegro during May 2015, which was attended by more than 50 people, including representatives of CEPF grantees, government officials, diplomats and CEPF's donor partners.

The findings of the Mid-term Assessment informed the scope of the final call for proposals in 2015, as well as subsequent cost extensions and grants by invitation, to fill gaps in the portfolio and consolidate successful initiatives. The findings of the Mid-term Assessment were also a vital input into the update of the ecosystem profile, given that the exercise explicitly asked the questions: what worked, what didn't work and why?

Other important exercises for documenting lessons learned were the Annual Portfolio Overviews<sup>4</sup>, which were produced internally by the CEPF Secretariat and RIT, the long-term vision for the Balkans sub-region, prepared by independent consultants in 2015, and the meetings of the Advisory Group, five of which were held between 2014 and 2016, including a final meeting held in Tangiers in advance of the regional consultation workshop for the ecosystem profile update.

In parallel to learning lessons at the portfolio level, lessons were also drawn from routine monitoring of individual projects, a large proportion of which were visited by the CEPF Secretariat and/or the RIT during implementation. Particularly important in this regard were the final completion reports prepared by grantees at the end of their projects, which included four explicit questions related to lessons learned.

### 1) Lessons learned at the portfolio level

#### Geographic focus

Political change, economic uncertainty and instability affected the implementation of the CEPF investment phase in many hotspot countries, and these factors are likely to continue to affect some countries in the next phase. Spreading grant making across multiple eligible countries, with flexibility in terms of timing and scope of calls for proposals, maximized CEPF's ability to take advantage of opportunities, while minimizing the risk of failure to meet portfolio-level targets due to political or security problems in particular countries. Looking forwards, there are likely to be similar opportunities to support CSOs in post-conflict situations over the next five years. Globally, CEPF has an established track record of supporting CSOs in post-conflict countries (e.g. Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, etc.), where minimal funding can make a major difference to the resurgence of a CSO community and to integrating environmental concerns into plans for reconstruction and social and economic recovery. The risks and merits of any such engagement in the case of post-conflict countries in the Mediterranean Basin would need to be carefully considered.

Regarding the number of sites (i.e., KBAs) that should be prioritized for CEPF support, the experience from the CEPF portfolio suggests that it is necessary to prioritize at least 50% more sites for CEPF support than there are available resources for, because of the following reasons:

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<sup>3</sup> [www.cepf.net/resources/documents/mediterranean-basin-mid-term-assessment-2015](http://www.cepf.net/resources/documents/mediterranean-basin-mid-term-assessment-2015)

<sup>4</sup> The Annual Portfolio Overview reports are available at the following link: [www.cepf.net/our-work/biodiversity-hotspots/mediterranean-basin](http://www.cepf.net/our-work/biodiversity-hotspots/mediterranean-basin)



- It is not always possible to invest in sites initially prioritized, due to security reasons, evolution of the political situation or the lack of endorsement by national authorities. During the initial phase, this was the case for Syria and parts of Libya (security), Egypt and Turkey (lack of endorsement), and Croatia (EU accession).
- Even when investment in a country is possible, it can happen that no suitable, competitive proposals are received under open calls, due to lack of interest or low capacity among local organizations.
- Investments at some sites might not result in direct conservation impacts (in particular for sites where there has been little or no previous conservation investment, thus requiring CEPF to focus on preparatory actions that do not translate into measurable impact during the duration of the investment phase).
- The constantly evolving donor landscape can make CEPF investment at some sites no longer relevant. This is especially the case when another donor makes a major investment at a site prioritized for CEPF funding: CEPF may decide not to invest at that site, in order to avoid duplication of effort.

Another lesson learned is that the operating environment for CSOs in some hotspot countries requires significant flexibility during implementation to allow for impactful investment. In Algeria, for example, the law limits the activity of NGOs, which can only work in the district where they are established. NGOs working at CEPF priority sites were scarce, while several established NGOs were unable to apply for CEPF funding, because no priority sites had been identified in the district where they were established. In conjunction with Algeria's late endorsement of the ecosystem profile and complex administrative arrangements regarding international funding, the situation led to a limited CEPF investment. To mitigate this constraint on CEPF implementation, the Mid-term Assessment included a recommendation to CEPF to expand the investment to other sites, not considered as priorities initially, and more generally to take a more flexible approach in countries where civil society context is more difficult.

In Libya, the political and security situation prevented NGOs from working in the single priority corridor that had been identified in the country: the Cyrenaican Peninsula. This led to CEPF, after the Mid-term Assessment, deciding to accept projects from the western part of the country (i.e. west of Tripoli, where the security situation was more stable), and to adopt a flexible approach to supporting civil society.

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

### **Management of the CEPF program**

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

important role to play as “mentoring structures”, engaging local and grassroots CSOs through sub-grants, providing hands-on capacity building and supporting them to applying to small grant mechanisms.

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

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

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

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

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

Compared with influencing local and national government, the experience of grantees with the private sector was even more limited. This requires specific attention and efforts in the coming years. Based on the experience from the CEPF portfolio, it appears important to:

- Start at the local scale, with businesses that are rooted in the community and landscape.

- Seek opportunities to promote the image of the industry at the same time as delivering conservation benefits.
- Gather data that demonstrate to business the financial benefits of conservation action.
- Be creative in seeking opportunities for in-kind support from the private sector (e.g., meeting venues, assistance with transportation, etc.).

## 2) Lessons learned on thematic issues

### Coastal zone management

Strategic Direction 1 was focused on coastal regions: “promote civil society involvement in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) to minimize the negative effects of coastal development”. This strategic direction was focused on three priority corridors (Southwest Balkans, Cyrenaican Peninsula, and Mountains, Plateaus and Wetlands of Algerian Tell and Tunisia), as well as on 20 coastal and marine KBAs in other corridors. The investment priorities focused on implementing integrated coastal zone management, influencing the European tourism market, and enhancing local livelihoods through nature-based tourism. Although 37 projects were eventually funded under this strategic direction, experience showed that most CSOs did not have the capacity and credibility needed to address complex, multi-stakeholder conservation challenges at the level of entire coastal corridors. Lessons learned from the implementation of these grants included that:

- ICZM is a complex concept, which is poorly understood by many local CSOs, with little good explanatory material available in local languages. Starting with a site-focused approach and using this as a platform for engagement with wider planning and policy issues was shown to be an effective way of approaching the issue.
- Timing is key to success, and this requires CSOs to be opportunistic. In several cases, there were no opportunities for CSOs to engage in ICZM, as there was no on-going government-led process at the priority sites and corridors, and CSOs themselves were not in a position to catalyze the launch of ICZM processes. The need for opportunistic engagement in government-led processes that have their own timeline is not always compatible with CEPF-funded projects, which have a lead time of 6 to 12 months.
- CSOs generally found it difficult to initiate or influence ICZM planning processes because these are the preserve of national governments, which, especially in North Africa, were not open to CSOs playing a leading role. A project with the objective of influencing ICZM is unlikely to have an impact unless there is a clear opportunity for engagement with concerned government agencies. Such opportunities are becoming more frequent with the recent changes in government in some hotspot countries. Nevertheless, this kind of intervention will be difficult to promote proactively but, rather, will require CEPF to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves. This calls for relatively small-scale funding, available quickly to enable CSOs to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.
- The structure of the CEPF investment strategy led to a separation between work on protected areas (covered under one strategic direction) and work on coastal sites (covered under a separate strategic direction). In practice, many important protected areas are located within coastal regions, and there are important opportunities for CSOs to support their management.
- The rapid growth in tourism in North Africa that was anticipated in the ecosystem profile did not occur, primarily because of security concerns, although growth was rapid in the Balkans and Cape Verde. The European tourism market was in flux during the investment phase, influenced by political and economic developments in the EU and the countries of the hotspot as well as globally. The investment strategy included an investment priority to influence the European tourism market but this proved hard to achieve.
- The best results were obtained when local organizations were provided with the requisite means and support to achieve substantial results at the local level, thereby gaining in capacity and

legitimacy. This established a basis for some of these organizations to start working at a larger scale and effectively participate in and influence government-led ICZM processes.

### **Conservation of river basins and freshwater biodiversity**

Strategic Direction 2 focused on river basins: “sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources established”. This strategic direction focused on four priority corridors: Atlas Mountains; Taurus Mountains<sup>5</sup>; Orontes Valley and Levantine Mountains; and Southwest Balkans. There were four investment priorities under this strategic direction, focused on: implementation of integrated river basin initiatives; support for policies and capacity; new financing mechanisms for catchment management; and improvements to agricultural water use allowing sufficient water for environmental functions. Best practices were captured and shared with relevant stakeholders throughout the hotspot.

Lessons learned from the CEPF portfolio included that:

- The Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) approach is complex and few CSOs have both a full understanding of the concept and the skills required to implement it. There were, nevertheless, some successes in mitigating impacts of infrastructure development projects and reducing water pollution.
- Geographic priorities were not clearly defined for the strategic direction, other than at the landscape scale. There was a need for better definition of sites for threatened species, to facilitate identification of threats and potential mitigating actions, and maximize the impact of interventions on biodiversity conservation.
- Although the lack of a site-focus to some interventions under this strategic direction was a problem, work on protected areas under a different strategic direction added significant value to the work on freshwater KBAs. However, the overlap between the two strategic directions created confusion for grantees and practical difficulties for portfolio management.
- Community awareness, and a demonstrated link between human development issues (e.g., water quality and availability) and conservation, were key to effective engagement of local people in conservation interventions.
- There was potential for private sector engagement, especially as part of sustainable financing, although more could have been done to realize this.

### **3) Lessons learned on period of investment**

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

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<sup>5</sup> The Taurus Mountains corridor is located in Turkey, where CEPF did not make any grants during the initial phase of investment.

## Annex 1: Progress against the Portfolio Logframe

Objective	Targets	Results
<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>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> <p><i>(Note: due to eligibility issues, these targets were reduced to 42 KBAs in 5 priority corridors following Mid-term Assessment)</i></p>	<p>108 projects were awarded, benefitting 91 organizations (grantees, sub-grantees, small grantees). Projects were supported at 65 KBAs in five priority corridors.</p> <p>15 policies or regulations were directly influenced.</p> <p>Projects were supported at 65 KBAs; improved management was recorded for at least 51 of them, covering an estimated area of 2,177,000 ha.</p> <p>A wide range of activities related to sustainable use of natural resources and improved agricultural or fishing practices were supported at 51 sites. Overall, the area of productive land where changes in productive practices had positive impacts on biodiversity was estimated at 1,485,000 ha.</p> <p>The Ecosystem Profile, co-funded by the MAVA Foundation and Prince Albert II Foundation, was widely distributed. The MAVA Foundation became a regional donor to CEPF for the Mediterranean Basin, providing an additional \$1.129 million in funding. CEPF participated in the Donor Round Table for the Mediterranean. GETF (Coca Cola Foundation) and the Prince Albert Foundation made investments totaling \$600,000 that built directly on previous CEPF projects. The Ecosystem Profile and KBA list are being used as a basis for a Natura2000 preparatory action in Montenegro. The EU Delegation used priority KBAs as basis for targeting support to environmental CSOs in Albania. CEPF supported preparation and implementation of the North Africa PPI.</p>

Intermediate Outcome	Intermediate Indicators	Results
<p><b>Outcome 1.</b> 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>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>	<p>8 projects had impacts on income generation through ecotourism (in Montenegro, Albania, Tunisia and Cape Verde). Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marketing local food and handicraft products, ecotourism accommodation, local homestays, micro-grants to local businesses, work with fishermen</li> </ul> <p>6 projects had impacts on environmentally friendly tourism practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tourism operator (resort) adopted sea turtle watching best practices in Cape Verde (Boa Vista).</li> <li>- The Ulcinj Urban Planning and Coastal Zone Management plan in Montenegro was influenced to integrate more eco-friendly tourism initiatives (3 projects in total).</li> <li>- New small eco-businesses were created in Albania (Bojana, Karaburun peninsula): diving tours, eco-guides, and habitat restoration.</li> <li>- New circuits and tourism products were offered to small businesses in Tunisia (Cap Bon, Tunis).</li> </ul> <p>Coastal zone management was improved within 21 coastal KBAs: 2 in Algeria; 5 in Albania; 3 in Cape Verde; 1 in Montenegro; 8 in Tunisia; and 2 Morocco. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil society was engaged to influence coastal planning in Montenegro's Ulcinj Municipality.</li> <li>- The integration of ICZM protocols into local planning was influenced in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.</li> <li>- Local municipalities and CSOs were supported to prepare and integrate local development plans in El Kala National Park, Algeria.</li> </ul>

Intermediate Outcome	Intermediate Indicators	Results
<p><b>Outcome 2.</b> 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.</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>	<p>12 river basins have initiatives to improve management at basin or sub-basin level (5 KBAs in Morocco, 4 in Albania, 2 in Macedonia, plus initiatives influencing river basin management under Strategic Direction 3 in Jordan and Lebanon).</p> <p>Apart from the national concrete IRBM actions, the IUCN <i>Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation Priorities</i> project, co-funded by MAVA, produced an assessment and mapping of 1,236 freshwater species and identified and listed 167 freshwater KBAs, among which 40 meet the criteria of the Alliance for Zero Extinction.</p> <p>Coordinated actions of civil society led to adoption of measures for improved preservation of ecosystems in three freshwater basins: Drin River; Orhid Lake; and Dojran Lake (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, FYR Macedonia).</p> <p>The Prespa and Orhid Lakes Nature Fund (PONT) was established for transboundary area in FYR Macedonia and Greece under the auspices of WWF Greece, with a €25 million endowment from MAVA and KfW. CEPF humbly supported the establishment of the fund (communication, strategic assessment, etc.) with focus on FYR Macedonia.</p> <p>Two projects (Albania, Lebanon) worked on assessing the value of ecosystem services, paving the way for future PES schemes.</p> <p>6 initiatives preserved water resources and protected freshwater ecosystems :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Morača river, Montenegro: drop-by-drop irrigation.</li> <li>- Ait Mhamed and Imegdale, Morocco: provision of drinking water to two villages together with reforestation of 80 ha for the conservation of land against erosion.</li> <li>- Dojran Lake, Macedonia : community groups for wise use of water resources.</li> <li>- Skumibini River in Albania: farmers' association improved irrigation system and maintained wetlands.</li> <li>- Anti-Lebanon Mountains, Lebanon: <i>Hima</i> approach promoted.</li> <li>- Mujib, Jordan: green fodder production promoted.</li> </ul>

Intermediate Outcomes	Intermediate Indicators	Results
<p><b>Outcome 3.</b> Conservation status of 70 priority key biodiversity areas improved via enhancing the protected area systems, supporting local communities and promoting international cooperation.</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><i>(Note: actions under Strategic Direction 3 covered 33 out of the revised list of 42 priority KBAs (79%); the results here also include some activities supported under Strategic Directions 1 and 2 that resulted in improved management of other KBAs.)</i></p> <p>Number of hectares brought under new or upgraded protection.</p>	<p>CEPF supported actions at 65 sites, resulting in strengthened management or protection of 51 KBAs, covering a total area of 2,177,000 ha. In the remaining 14 sites, activities either did not (yet) demonstrate impact on the management of the site, or were limited in size and scope and not expected to have a direct impact on site management (e.g., scientific study, awareness-raising activities, etc.). Of this total, the area of productive landscapes (i.e., fisheries, agriculture, forestry, etc.) where changes in productive practices with positive impacts on biodiversity were noted is estimated at 1,485,000 ha.</p> <p>Among the 51 KBAs that benefitted from CEPF support, 30 are under protection status (at least partially). 80% of the protected areas covered by CEPF projects saw an increase in their METT score; these covered 1,114,000 ha.</p> <p>8 new protected areas were created, covering 27,651 ha. 7 other sites are in the process of being declared as protected areas, with an estimated additional surface area of 115,000 ha.</p> <p>Overall, the creation of about 140,000 ha of new protected areas is expected. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The concept of micro-reserves was used for the first time in Lebanon, based on agreements with local authorities on communal lands (Ehmej), or with the church (Sarada) or private landowners (Baskinta). Although small in size, these sites are of important biodiversity value and are well adapted to the preservation of micro-endemic or rare plants. The first micro-reserve (Ehmej) was officially created in 2015, and officially recognized by the Lebanese Ministry for Environment, setting up a precedent for scaling up the approach in newly identified Important Plant Areas.</li> <li>- Also in Lebanon, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon adapted the traditional <i>Hima</i> concept of land and water management. This alternative, community-managed protected area concept could potentially be replicated in many other places in the Mediterranean Basin.</li> <li>- Qaytouli-Roum in Lebanon became the first "sustainable hunting area" to be set up in the country. The area is managed by the local government with support from hunting and nature conservation organizations.</li> </ul>



	<p>Percent and number of grants that enable effective stewardship by local communities for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Kuriat Islands Marine Protected Area in Tunisia is expected to become the first co-managed protected area in the country. A local CSO (Notre Grand Bleu) will be closely involved in the everyday management of the site: a situation that would have been completely impossible only a couple of years ago.</li> </ul> <p>In the Balkans, at least 83% of the grants awarded under this strategic direction had objectives related to increased stewardship by local communities.</p> <p>In the Middle-East, at least 55% of the grants awarded under this strategic direction had objectives related to increased stewardship of local communities.</p> <p>In North Africa, at least 33% of the grants awarded under this strategic direction had objectives related to increased stewardship of local communities.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4.</b> 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>	<p>Performance of the RIT was rated as satisfactory by the CEPF Secretariat.</p> <p>Civil Society Tracking Tool data available for 76 grantees. 72% increased their score, of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6% saw their score decrease significantly (more than 5%).</li> <li>- 38% saw their score remain stable (between minus 5% and plus 5%).</li> <li>- 56% saw a significant increase in their score (more than 5%), with 16% seeing an increase of over 25%.</li> </ul>

## Annex 2. CEPF Grants, Mediterranean Basin – Phase I

Zone of Implementation	Sub-Region	Strategic Direction	Applicant/ Grantee	Applicant Acronym	Title	Total
Albania	Balkans	SD1	Institute of Nature Conservation in Albania	INCA	Albania Field Project: Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas	\$236 628
Albania	Balkans	SD1	Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania	PPNEA	Land of Eagles and Castles: Pilot Sustainable Tourism Model for the Albanian Adriatic Coastline	\$258 608
Albania	Balkans	SD1	Istituto Sindacale Per La Cooperazione Allo Sviluppo	ISCOS	Preserve and Enhance Sustainable Tourism Between Lalzi Bay and Berat, Albania	\$52 993
Albania	Balkans	SD2	Urban Research Institute (URI)	URI	Albanian Mid-Term Stakeholder Assessment of the CEPF Investment	\$2 270
Albania	Balkans	SD2	Instituti i Politikave Mjedisore	IEP	Developing Sustainable Water Management Practices for the Ohrid Lake Region	\$13 050
Albania	Balkans	SD2	The Women At Work Initiative (TWAWI)	TWAWI	Master Plan for the Recovery of the Spring Water Ecosystem in Lalzi Bay	\$19 376
Albania	Balkans	SD2	Agro-Environmental & Economic Management-Center	(AEEM-Centre)	Economic and Ecological Assessment of Ecosystem Services in Karavasta Lagoon	\$19 987
Albania	Balkans	SD2	Urban Research Institute	URI	Conservation of Biodiversity in Patoku Lagoon and Ishmi River Outlet Through Integrated River Basin Management	\$180 000
Albania	Balkans	SD2	Centre for Forest Studies and Consulting (Albaforest)	ALBAFOREST	Integrated Drini River Basin Management	\$116 150
Albania	Balkans	SD2	Agro-Environmental & Economic Management-Center	AEEMC	Integrated Natural Water Management of Shkumbini River, Albania	\$29 470
Albania	Balkans	SD3	Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds & Wild Fauna (Mammals)	ASPBM	Enforcing Hunting Legislation and Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Wildlife Management in Albania	\$120 267
RIT	Hotspot Level	SD4	BirdLife International	Birdlife International	Mediterranean Regional Implementation Team: Administrative Functions	\$985 215
RIT	Hotspot Level	SD4	BirdLife International	Birdlife International	Mediterranean Regional Implementation Team: Programmatic Functions	\$1 050 527

Hotspot Level	Hotspot Level	SD3	IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	IUCN,	Freshwater Key Biodiversity Area refinement: Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot.	\$19 705
Hotspot Level	Hotspot Level	SD2	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	IUCN	Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation Priorities for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot	\$248 331
Hotspot Level	Hotspot Level	SD1	KANOPEE SAS (Horwath)	HORWATH HTL	Studying the Involvement of the Tourism Sector in Financing Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas	\$19 976
Regional Projects - Balkans	Balkans	SD2	WWF Greece	WWF Greece	Promoting Conservation in the Transboundary Prespa Eco-Region of Albania, Macedonia and Greece: Establishment of the Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust	\$76 981
Regional Projects - Balkans	Balkans	SD2	Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development	MIO-ECSDE	Living Well in Harmony With the Drin: Raising Public Awareness, Enhancing Knowledge and Empowering NGOs to Protect and Conserve Freshwater Ecosystems in the Drin River Basin	\$199 983
Regional Projects - Balkans	Balkans	SD3	Društvo za jamsko biologijo (SCB)	Društvo za jamsko biologijo (SCB)	Assessment of the endangered subterranean biodiversity of the Skadar/Shkodra Lake Basin	\$19 992
Regional Projects - Balkans	Balkans	SD3	Asociacion Beyond Light (The Living Med)	(The Living Med)	Multimedia Communications Campaign for Dalmatian Pelicans in Lake Skadar	\$17 000
Regional Projects - Balkans	Balkans	SD3	Noe Conservation	Noe Conservation	Conservation of Pelicans, a Key Biodiversity Species of Skadar Lake	\$287 120
Regional Projects - Balkans	Balkans	SD3	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	IUCN (ESARO)	Supporting the Long-Term Sustainable Management of Transboundary Lake Skadar	\$287 508
Algeria	North Africa	SD1	Laboratoire de recherche "Ecologie des Systèmes terrestres et Aquatiques" (EcoSTaq)	EcoSTaq	Developing an Integrated Coastal Management Plan for l'Edough	\$19 900
Algeria	North Africa	SD1	Association Promotion des Femmes Rurales de Wilaya de Skikda	APFRWS	A Study for the Development of Ecotourism Activities at Guerbes Sanhadja, Algeria	\$19 110
Algeria	North Africa	SD3	Souidi Zahira	Souidi Zahira	Study of floral diversity and dynamics in Macta Marsh, Algeria : Application for biodiversity conservation	\$18 090
Algeria	North Africa	SD3	Association de Réflexion, d'Échanges et d'Actions pour L'Environnement et le Développement	AREA-ED	Contribution à la création participative d'une aire protégée dans le massif des Babor	\$157 680

Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD3	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	IUCN MedPO	Promouvoir la valeur des zones clés pour la biodiversité à travers le renforcement du rôle des organisations de la société civile dans leur conservation et gestion en Afrique du Nord	\$316 076
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD3	Fondation Tour du Valat	TdV	Suivi des Oiseaux d'eau en Afrique du Nord pour la conservation des zones humides	\$230 000
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD1	Cabinet Sami Ben Haj	Cabinet Sami Ben Haj	Cartographie des Initiatives GIZC, collecte et partage des leçons apprises dans trois corridors prioritaires et deux zones clés pour la biodiversité en Afrique du Nord	\$51 163
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD1	Living Planet Tunisia	Living Planet Tunisia	Intégration Effective de l'Approche Gestion Intégrée des Zones Côtières dans les Pays de l'Afrique du Nord	\$135 627
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD1	Conservation International	CI CSP	Introducing the Conservation Agreement Model for Community-Based Conservation to Nongovernmental Organizations in Tunisia and Algeria	\$19 716
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD1	Fondation Tour du Valat	Fondation Tour du Valat	Integration of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Objectives and Nature Conservation in Algeria's El Kala National Park and Surrounding Areas: Training on Territorial Challenges and Sustainable Development	\$17 600
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD1	Association de Réflexion, d'Échanges et d'Actions pour L'Environnement et le Développement	AERA-ED	Intégration des objectifs de la GIZC et de la conservation de la nature dans les plans de développement locaux des territoires du Parc national d'El Kala (y compris les régions limitrophes en Algérie et en Tunisie)	\$53 291
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe Country Office Bosnia and Herzegovina (REC)	REC- BiH	Bosnian and Herzegovina Mid-Term Stakeholder Assessment of the CEPF Investment	\$4 830
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Mountain Rescue Service of Herzegovina (Hercegovanka Gorska Sluzba Spasavanja)	HGSS	Production of Speleological Cadaster for the Trebižat Area	\$18 684
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Hrvatska Ekološka Udruga	BUNA	Educating the Public on Sustainable Water Use and the Protection of Endemic Fish in the Neretva River Valley	\$18 750
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Društvo Za Jamsko Biologijo - Society of Cave Biology (SCB)	SCB	A Survey of the Distribution of Olm by Environmental DNA Sampling	\$16 515
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Institute for Adriatic Crops and Karst Reclamation (IAC)	IAC	Conservation of Wild Grapevine (Vitis Vinifera L. Subsp. sylvestris) in Bosnia and Herzegovina	\$16 970

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Society for Biological Research and Protection of Nature (BIO.LOG)	BIO.LOG	Karst Freshwater Habitats: Identification and Participatory Conservation Planning of Threatened Invertebrate and Fish Species	\$19 850
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Centar za krš i speleologiju (Center for Karst and Speleology) (CKS)	CKS (Center for Karst and Speleology)	Protection of Underground Biodiversity in the Neretva River Catchment Area: Identifying and Raising the Awareness of Conservation Hotspots	\$15 300
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	WWF European Policy Programme-Branch Office	WWF -EPP	Securing the Future of Hutovo Blato Nature Park	\$169 844
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	EuroNatur Foundation	EuroNatur Foundation	Improving the Management of Hutovo Blato Nature Park	\$162 209
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Center for Karst and Speleology	CKS	Protection of Bats in the Neretva River Catchment Area	\$40 241
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	Ornitološko društvo naše ptice	OD naše ptice	Hutovo Blato Nature Park and Mostarsko Blato as Safe Breeding, Stop-Over and Wintering Sites for Birds	\$48 550
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Balkans	SD3	The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe	REC	Promoting Trebizat as an Ecotourism Destination	\$109 996
Cabo Verde	North Africa	SD1	BIOS.CV – Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Development	BIOS.CV	Integrating conservation, tourism and local community development on Boa Vista Island	\$19 660
Cabo Verde	North Africa	SD1	BIOS.CV – Association for the Conservation of the Environment and Sustainable Development (BIOS.CV)	BIOS.CV	Environmental Initiatives to Enhance Ecofriendly Tourism in Boa Vista Island, Cape Verde	\$19 800
Cabo Verde	North Africa	SD1	Turtle Foundation	Turtle Foundation	Fair Access: Managing Turtle Watching and Quad Bike Traffic on the Nesting Beaches of Boavista	\$3 885
Cabo Verde	North Africa	SD1	Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves	SPEA	Protecting Threatened and Endemic Species in Cape Verde: A Major Island Restoration Project	\$275 309
Cabo Verde	North Africa	SD3	Biosfera I Association for environment protection	Biosfera I	Strengthening organizational capacities and field research on Raso Islet, Cape Verde	\$19 438
Cabo Verde	North Africa	SD3	International Union for Conservation of Nature Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation	IUCN	Identifying Important Plant Areas in Cabo Verde	\$65 598
Croatia	Balkans	SD3	Institute for Adriatic Crops and Karst Reclamation (IAC)	IAC	Locating the Wild Grapevine ( <i>Vitis Vinifera</i> L. Subsp. <i>sylvestris</i> ) Along the River Banks of Krka (Croatia)	\$2 700
Jordan	Middle-East	SD1	Sweimeh Association Charity	SAC	Libyan Ecotourism Experience Exchange Visit to Jordan	\$15 554

Jordan	Middle-East	SD3	The United Society for Developing Water Resources and Environment	USDWE	Jordanian Mid-Term Stakeholder Assessment of the CEPF Investment	\$2 231
Jordan	Middle-East	SD3	Sweimeh Association Charity	SAC	Rehabilitation of the Sweimeh Eco-Park	\$19 450
Jordan	Middle-East	SD3	Bab Assalam Women's Cooperative	BASWC)	Integrated Ecosystem Management of Tel Al Arbin Special Conservation Area	\$19 700
Jordan	Middle-East	SD3	The United Society for Developing Water Resources and Environment (USDWE)	USDWE	Green Fodder Pilot Project	\$19 975
Jordan	Middle-East	SD3	The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature	RSCN	Strengthening Management Planning of Mujib as a Biosphere Reserve in Jordan	\$242 103
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL)	SPNL	Evaluating the Status of the Monk Seal Population in Lebanon	\$4 700
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Université Saint Joseph de Beyrouth (USJ)	USJ	Lebanon Mid-Term Stakeholder Assessment of the CEPF Investment	\$2 690
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Environment For Life (EFL)	EFL	Raising Awareness on Hunting and Biodiversity Conservation in Al Chouf Cedars Nature Reserve Key Biodiversity Area	\$16 000
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Arts, Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon (AUL)	AUL	Photographic Guide to Wildflowers of Lebanon with Emphasis on the Three Priority KBAs in Lebanon	\$19 920
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Lebanese Environment Forum	LEF	Promoting Sustainable Hunting Practices in Lebanon Using a Community-Based Approach	\$182 385
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Université Saint-Joseph	USJ	Détermination de zones importantes pour les plantes et création de micro-réserves pour conserver des plantes rares ou endémiques du Liban.	\$207 788
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Al-Shouf Cedar Society	ACS	Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods and Promoting Community Management of Shouf Biosphere Reserve	\$160 300
Lebanon	Middle-East	SD3	Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon	SPNL	Demonstrating Sustainable Management of Important Eastern Mediterranean Forests and Key Biodiversity Areas in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains	\$220 220
Libya	North Africa	SD1	Libyan Wildlife Trust (LWT)	LWT	Improve Knowledge on Integrated Management of Coastal Zones and Biodiversity Protection in Alqrbolli Area, Libya	\$15 390
Libya	North Africa	SD1	Libyan Society for Birds (LSB)	LSB	Awareness of the Local Communities and Hunters About the Importance of Wetlands and Waterbirds	\$19 960
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD1	Reseau Enfant de la Terre (RET)	RET	Tunisian and Libyan Mid-Term Stakeholder Assessment of the CEPF Investment	\$4 308
Regional Projects - North Africa	North Africa	SD1	WWF European Policy Programme-Branch Office	WWF EPP	Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas	\$349 470

Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD2	Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)	REC Com MK	Macedonian Mid-Term Stakeholder Assessment of the CEPF Investment	\$4 996
Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD2	Environmental Organization "Grashnica" (Grashnica)	Grashnica	Smart Water Use in the Ohrid Lake Region	\$18 880
Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD2	GAUS INSTITUT – Fondacija za novi tehnologii, inovacii i transfer na znaenje (GAUSS)	GAUSS	Agricultural Water Stewardship Initiative in Ohrid Lake Basin	\$13 100
Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD2	Centro Euro-Mediterraneo sui Cambiamenti Climatici S.c.a r.l.	CCMC	Integrated Water Resources Management at Dojran Lake	\$117 166
Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD2	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe	REC CO Macedonia	Developing Capacities for the Sustainability of Dojran Lake	\$168 663
Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD2	Macedonian Ecological Society	MES	Water for the Lakes, Bogs, Streams and People on Jablanica Mountain	\$75 116
Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD3	Macedonian Ecological Society	MES	Education and Capacity Building for the Conservation of Lake Dojran	\$19 282
Macedonia, FYROM	Balkans	SD3	Environmental Citizens Association "Front 21/42"	Front 21/42	Save Ohrid Lake And Galižica National Park, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia	\$32 287
Montenegro	Balkans	SD1	ZELENI DOM - Green Home	NGO Green Home	Montenegro Mid-Term Stakeholder Assessment of the CEPF Investment	\$1 945
Montenegro	Balkans	SD1	KAWKA PRODUCTION, VIDEO SNEMANJE Gregor Šubic s.p (KAWKA)	KAWKA	Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation Actions in Ulcinj Salinas	\$16 980
Montenegro	Balkans	SD1	ECNC Land & Sea Group Agrupación Europea de Interés Económico	ECNC Land & Sea Group A.E.I.E	Fostering and Bringing Together Nature, Tourism and Civil Society at Bojana Delta Through Integrated Coastal Zone Management	\$240 382
Montenegro	Balkans	SD1	Ngo Center For Protection And Research Of Birds Of Montenegro	CZIP	Mediterranean Mid-term Assessment Regional Meeting - Montenegro	\$33 940
Montenegro	Balkans	SD1	NGO Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro	CZIP	Ecotourism in Ulcinj Salina	\$194 748
Montenegro	Balkans	SD1	NGO Green Home	NGO Green Home	Support Local Communities to Implement Nature-Based Tourism Practices Around Sasko Lake	\$123 820
Montenegro	Balkans	SD1	Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development	IEED	Engaging Civil Society in Integrated Coastal Zone Management Planning	\$58 012

Montenegro	Balkans	SD2	Ngo Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro	CZIP	River Mora?a Sustainable Development Against Floods	\$89 997
Montenegro	Balkans	SD2	The Network for the Affirmation of NGO Sector	MANS	River Mora?a: The New Way Forward	\$39 966
Montenegro	Balkans	SD3	Crnogorsko društvo ekologa [Montenegrin Ecologists Society (MES)]	CDE-MES	Action for Ecological Valorisation of Buljarica Cove	\$19 980
Montenegro	Balkans	SD3	NGO Green Home (GREEN HOME)	NGO Green Home	Engaging Civil Societies in Harmonization of Actions for Improving the Conservation and Management Effectiveness of Lake Skadar	\$19 375
Morocco	North Africa	SD1	Association des Enseignants des Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre (AESVT-MAROC)	AESVT-MAROC	Pilot Project for the Effective Integration of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Approach to the New Coastal Law: Case Corridor Ouranie and Moulaya	\$19 406
Morocco	North Africa	SD1	Groupe de Recherche Pour la Protection des Oiseaux au Maroc (Grepom)	GREPOM	The Essaouira Dunes: Mapping a Sustainable Future for the Coastal Atlantic Plains of Morocco	\$19 432
Morocco	North Africa	SD1	Association de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources	AGIR	Contribution à la Conservation de la Lagune de Bou Areg (Mar Chica) à travers l'Implication de la Société Civile dans la Gestion Intégrée des Zones Côtières.	\$189 132
Morocco	North Africa	SD2	ADDICT COM	ADDICT COM	Communication Support for Ifrane National Park	\$15 594
Morocco	North Africa	SD2	Tissu associatif de développement de la province d'Azilal	TADA	Supporting Civil Society in Conserving Water Resources and Biodiversity in Azilal	\$19 997
Morocco	North Africa	SD2	Section d'Ifrane de l'Association des Enseignants des Sciences de la Vie et de la Terre au Maroc (AVEST)	AVEST	Implementing Sustainable Agricultural Practices Contributing to the Protection and Ecological Integrity of the Oued Boufekrane River	\$19 901
Morocco	North Africa	SD2	Enda Maghreb	ENDA	Ensuring the Preservation and Enhancement of Atlas Mountain Ecosystems through the Capacity Building of Local Stakeholders in Sustainable Water Management	\$19 700
Morocco	North Africa	SD2	Association Haute Moulouya pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature	AHMEPN	Conservation de la biodiversité pour l'orientation stratégique 2 Cas du micro-bassin versant d'oued Outat et extensions (Affluent d'Oued Moulouya Maroc)	\$86 608
Morocco	North Africa	SD2	Global Diversity Foundation	GDF	Integrated River Basin Management in Ait M'hamed and Imegdale Rural Communes	\$196 987
Morocco	North Africa	SD2	Association Marocaine pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature	AMEPN	Valorisation écotouristique de la biodiversité piscicole et aquatique de l'Atlas marocain pour la contribution à la préservation des ressources en eau "Cas des Parcs Nationaux d'Ifrane et du Haut Atlas Oriental"	\$276 368



Morocco	North Africa	SD3	Stichting Moroccan Primate Conservation (MPC)	MPC	Restoring the Endangered Barbary Macaque Species	\$19 152
Morocco	North Africa	SD3	Global Diversity Foundation (GDF)	GDF	Sustainable Livelihoods and Community Management of Medicinal Plants and Important Plant Areas of the High Atlas Mountains	\$19 900
Tunisia	North Africa	SD1	Reseau Enfant de la Terre (RET)	RET	Promoting wetland eco-tourism for local development (Promotion des zones humides pour le développement local)	\$17 770
Tunisia	North Africa	SD1	Association de protection de l'environnement Hammem Ghezaz (APEHG)	APEHG	Circuit Ecotourism Within the Dunes of Ras Alby	\$19 962
Tunisia	North Africa	SD1	Association des Fans de la Chebba (AFC)	AFC	Protection of Marine Turtles and the Coastal Environment of the Kuriat Islands	\$19 963
Tunisia	North Africa	SD1	Association Les Amis des Oiseaux	AAO	Projet de Développement d'activités éco-Touristiques pour la Conservation de Sites Clés de la Biodiversité au Nord de la Tunisie	\$285 910
Tunisia	North Africa	SD1	Association Tunisienne des Ingénieurs Agronomes	ATIA	Projet de Renforcement des Organisations Tunisiennes En Compétences Techniques Environnementales	\$70 617
Tunisia	North Africa	SD1	Association Les Amis des Oiseaux	AAO	Mediterranean Mid-Term Assessment Regional Meeting	\$9 939
Tunisia	North Africa	SD1	Notre Grand Bleu	Notre Grand Bleu	Contribute to the Conservation of Kuriat Islands and the Bay of Monastir Through the Involvement of Civil Society and the Private Sector	\$181 010

**CRITICAL** | **ECOSYSTEM**  
PARTNERSHIP FUND