



Mesoamerica

Mesoamerica Biodiversity Hotspot

CEPF INVESTMENT PLANNED IN REGION

Northern Mesoamerica: \$7.3 million

Southern Mesoamerica: \$5.5 million

QUICK FACTS

Mesoamerica holds approximately 440 species of mammals, 65 of which (15 percent) are found nowhere else.

The Mesoamerica Hotspot has an estimated 17,000 species of vascular plants, of which approximately 3,000 are unique to this hotspot.

In contrast to Mesoamerica's exceptional biological and cultural wealth, however, nearly 50 percent of the region's 45 million people live below the poverty line. In rural areas, more than 70 percent of the population is poor or needy.

Approximately 80 percent of the region's original forest has been cleared or significantly altered.

While many national governments have declared new national parks or reserves, many of these areas are poorly protected or too small for maintaining viable populations of species over the long run. With the latter limitation, establishing connectivity through appropriate land uses between protected areas to avoid fragmentation is crucial.

The Mesoamerica biodiversity hotspot harbors the highest montane forests of Central America, with the most extensive and best-protected cloud forests in the region. The hotspot is one of the 34 richest and most threatened reservoirs of plant and animal life on Earth.

Forming a land bridge between two continents, the Mesoamerica Hotspot features species representative of North and South America, as well as its own unique wildlife. The jaguar, spider and howler monkeys, Baird's tapir, and the unusual horned guan are found here. The region is a critical flyway for at least 225 migratory species. Three of the Western Hemisphere's four migratory bird routes converge in Mesoamerica.

THREATS

Mesoamerica exhibits some of the highest deforestation rates in the world. Other direct threats include conflicts in legal frameworks; illegal logging and occupation of land; uncontrolled tourism; oil drilling and pipelines; unsustainable corporate and small-scale mining; unsustainable agriculture and hunting; and uncontrolled forest fires.

CEPF STRATEGY

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) has separate but complementary strategies, known as ecosystem profiles, for the northern and southern regions of the Mesoamerica Hotspot. Both strategies are underpinned by conservation outcomes—targets against which the success of investments can be measured. These targets are defined at three levels: species (extinctions avoided), sites (areas protected) and landscapes (corridors created). While CEPF cannot achieve all of the outcomes identified for a region on its own, the partnership is trying to ensure that its conservation

CEPF has separate but complementary strategies to address critical conservation issues in the northern and southern regions of the Mesoamerica Hotspot.



investments are working toward preventing biodiversity loss and that its success can be monitored and measured.

In **Northern Mesoamerica**, CEPF focuses predominantly on Belize, Guatemala, and Southern Mexico.

CEPF targets two priority areas: the Selva Maya conservation corridor, which extends throughout the southeast of Mexico over the province of Petén in Guatemala and throughout Belize; and the Selva Zoque and Chiapas/Guatemala Highlands corridor, which includes the key biodiversity areas of the Selva Zoque in Oaxaca; Chiapas and Veracruz; the Sierra Madre of Chiapas; and Cuchumatanes and the Sierra de las Minas in Guatemala.

Four strategic directions guide CEPF's approach in the northern region:

1. foster civil society participation in regional decisionmaking on select policies and investments to promote conservation and sustainable development of the Selva Maya and the Selva Zoque and Chiapas/Guatemala Highlands corridors
2. collaborate with other donor-funded projects to facilitate and operationalize successful conservation activities in Northern Mesoamerica's eight most important key biodiversity areas
3. Support priority conservation actions in three priority key biodiversity areas
4. prevent the extinction of Northern Mesoamerica's 106 Critically Endangered species (including in El Salvador and Honduras)

This regional strategy is funded over 5 years, beginning in 2004.

In **Southern Mesoamerica**, CEPF focuses on Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama. CEPF targets three priority areas: the Cerro Silva-Indio Maiz-La Selva corridor between Nicaragua and Costa Rica; the southern Talamanca region connecting with the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica; and the northern Talamanca-Bocas del Toro corridor between Costa Rica and Panama.

Four strategic directions guide CEPF's approach in the southern region:

1. strengthen key conservation alliances and networks within integral corridors
2. integrate connectivity among key, critical areas through economic alternatives
3. promote awareness and conservation of flagship species
4. support improved management of key protected areas

Funding for this regional strategy began in 2002.



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ABOUT US

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a global program that provides grants to nongovernmental organizations and other private sector partners to protect critical ecosystems.

CEPF is a joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank.

CEPF acts as a catalyst to create strategic working alliances among diverse groups, combining unique capacities and eliminating duplication of efforts for a coordinated, comprehensive approach to conservation challenges.

HOW TO LEARN MORE

For more information about CEPF, the strategies for this hotspot, and how to apply for grants, visit www.cepf.net.