

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Donor Council
Brussels, Belgium
Wednesday, 20 January 2016
2-5 p.m. Central European Time**

Report from the Executive Director

For Information Only:

The Executive Director will highlight key developments since the 27th meeting of the Donor Council on 24 June 2015. For information, a report highlighting the following activities since that date is attached:

- Follow-up to decisions made during the 27th meeting of CEPF Donor Council
- Partnership Highlights
- Updates on Profiling
- Highlights from the Field
- Field Visit Schedule
- Financial Summary (*summary as of 30 September 2015; numbers updated through December will be presented at the Donor Council meeting)
- Approved Grants (1 July 2015 – 30 September 2015)
- Partnership Highlights
- Media Clips

FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE 27th MEETING OF THE DONOR COUNCIL

During the 27th meeting of the CEPF Donor Council on 24 June 2015, the Donor Council requested the following actions.

- *Ensure compliance with procurement policies to finalize the Guinean Forests of West Africa hotspot ecosystem profile, should it be necessary to work directly with the UNEP-WCMC (World Conservation Monitoring Centre), currently a sub-grantee of the profiling lead IUCN Programme pour l'Afrique Centrale et Occidentale (PACO).*

The Secretariat was able to work with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) profiling team to bring the Guinean Forests of West Africa Ecosystem Profile up to CEPF standards, and the final draft of the profile is included in the packet of documents for the 28th meeting for Donor Council review and approval (Doc. CEPF/DC28/8a).

- *Circulate the date for the Cerrado's final consultation workshop once available to the full Donor Council and send the first draft of the profile to Gustavo Fonseca at the Global Environment Facility.*

The final stakeholder consultation workshop for the Cerrado ecosystem profile was held in Brasília during October 2015. The dates were circulated one month in advance to all members of the Donor Council, in the Quarterly Report for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2015. In addition, invitations were extended to in-country staff of CEPF's donors based in Brasília. The draft ecosystem profile was sent to Gustavo Fonseca by the CEPF Executive Director on 2 November 2015.

- *Follow up with Daniela Lerda of PADMA Consulting to ensure that the governance document does not state that the Donor Council members feel that Conservation International sitting on the Donor Council represents the view of civil society.*

This point has been clarified in the governance document submitted for Donor Council review and approval as part of the 28th meeting (Doc. CEPF/DC28/5a).

- *Distribute by the end of August a report summarizing the options that the Secretariat would like to pursue in terms of public funding, private sector engagement and governance along with the business plan drafted by PADMA.*

The Secretariat has developed a document on governance, which was reviewed by the Working Group during the 48th Meeting on 17 November 2015 (Doc. CEPF/DC28/5a), and a draft fundraising plan (Doc. CEPF/DC28/5b) to address these issues. These two documents are included in this packet and are on the agenda as part of the Update on Phase III for Donor Council review and approval.

- *Develop criteria for the grants by invitation and multi-hotspot grants for presentation to the Working Group.*

The Secretariat has developed criteria for grants by invitation and multi-hotspot grants. These will be presented to the Working Group for review in advance of its 49th meeting on 6 January 2016.

Partnership Highlights

CEPF and Climate Change

Biodiversity is central to addressing and adapting to climate change, which is altering, and in some cases diminishing, life on Earth.

In the biodiversity hotspots, CEPF grantees are working to secure the most biodiverse, and threatened, ecosystems. This strategic conservation action offers many benefits to people, including, in many instances, carbon storage, protection of fresh water supplies, buffer against extreme weather such as flooding and drought, sustainable land management and sustainable livelihoods.

“CEPF grantees clearly demonstrate effective approaches that, when taken to scale, will help the global community address the climate challenge using nature-based solutions — solutions that also contribute to the achievement of the 2020 biodiversity targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (also known as the Aichi Targets), and can help build necessary bridges between global climate and biodiversity initiatives,” said Thomas E. Lovejoy, senior fellow at the United Nations Foundation, George Mason University professor and co-editor of the book “Climate Change and Biodiversity.”



Anole lizard (*Anolis* sp.) in Jamaica. © Olivier Langrand

Read more about biodiversity and climate change, and the nature-based solutions that CEPF is promoting [here](#).

Green Night

In December, CEPF is participating in the Green Night, an event hosted by the French Embassy in Washington, D.C., to celebrate action in the fight against climate change. Event partners include the Conservation International (CI), Climate Reality Project, D.C. Green Embassies Forum and Energy Star. Learn more about the event [here](#).

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At a glance

- Hotspot strategies implemented 23
- Countries and territories with grants 92
- Partners supported 2,000
- Committed grants 192 million
- Amount leveraged by those grants 347 million
- Protected areas created [hectares] 13 million
- KBAs with strengthened management and protection [hectares] 36 million

Connecting with Existing and Potential Donors

In October, the CEPF Secretariat welcomed Andrea Kutter and Sachin Shahria, who are replacing Valerie Hickey as representatives of the World Bank in the CEPF Working Group. A session was organized to introduce them to the CEPF team, to the work of CEPF and to the procedures associated with the CEPF Working Group and Donor Council meetings.

A similar session took place a bit later with Yves Pinsonneault, who has replaced Daniela Raik as the representative of CI in the CEPF Working Group.

Mid-October, CEPF's Executive Director Olivier Langrand went to France to continue exploring the possibility and feasibility for the French Government to renew its financial support to CEPF, which initially came for CEPF Phase I (2007-2012) through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

In Paris, Olivier and CEPF Grant Director Pierre Carret, who is based in France, met with the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AFD and Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM) to assess the possibility of a replenishment for CEPF by France.

All parties who met expressed support for a replenishment of CEPF by France. However, France is currently focusing on the UNFCCC COP21, and as a result it was difficult to engage anyone on the subject of biodiversity even though all recognized that nature-based solutions should be part of the discussions on climate change.

The funding available for biodiversity conservation from French governmental sources is diminishing every year, with less grant funding compared to loan (through AFD). The grant budget is shrinking and it appears that no funding is available for a possible global contribution to CEPF as part of the 2016 budget and the prospect for 2017 also does not seem too encouraging.

It appeared that the best way to keep France involved in CEPF would be through regional investments of AFD in selected CEPF hotspots. This approach could be applied to West Africa, where CEPF is about to start its reinvestment, and possibly in the context of a reinvestment of CEPF in the Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspot considering the interest of France for countries of North Africa and more specifically Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

After France, Olivier and Pierre traveled to Brussels, Belgium, to meet with the European Union. Meetings took place with the representatives of the European Commission sitting on the CEPF Working Group, Arnold Jacques de Dixmude and Anne-Theo Seinen, who informed CEPF representatives of the restructuring, and changes of staff that have happened and will happen in the near future and may have an influence on CEPF.

The two Vice-Directorate Generals (DGs) for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO) are both now in charge of a mix of geographical and transversal Directorates. Klaus Rudischhauser is no longer in charge of Environment and therefore is not representing the DG DEVCO on the CEPF Donor Council. The other Vice-DG will be in charge, among others, of Environment, Climate and Energy, and Africa. S/He has not yet been appointed, which is expected to occur in early 2016. S/He will be the representative of DG DEVCO on the CEPF Donor Council.

Olivier and Pierre met with Daniel Calleja-Crespo, who was appointed as the new Director General for Environment in September, to present CEPF and to discuss his role as part of the CEPF Donor Council. Calleja-Crespo already knew



Sebket Soliman, an important bird area and key site for conservation of biodiversity in Tunisia. © Hichem Azafaf

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about CEPF as the result of a meeting with Peter Seligmann, CEO of CI and member of the CEPF Donor Council, that took place three weeks before. Calleja-Crespo expressed a great interest in CEPF and declared that he will continue representing DG for Environment in the CEPF Donor Council.

The first phase of investment of the European Union in CEPF covers a period from 2013 to the end of 2017. As announced by Rudischhauser about a year ago, the programming document for budget line “GPGC” (Global Public Goods and Challenges) already mentions CEPF replenishment. According to Jacques de Dixmude and Seinen, there should not be any problem with the replenishment of CEPF by the European Commission.

The DEVCO C2 (unit on climate change) staff will start to work on the process that includes the preparation of an Identification Document, and then the Formulation Document during the second half of 2016, with the objective to complete all the necessary steps (Quality Support Group, Inter-Service Consultation, etc.) by August or September 2017.

Regarding the amount, DEVCO C2 agreed to increase the amount for the replenishment of CEPF from the initial €18 million to the equivalent of \$25 million (depending on the exchange rate at the time of the finalization of the agreement).

In late November, Olivier went to Tokyo, Japan, to meet with the new team in charge of CEPF at the Ministry of Finance, represented by Masaaki Iizuka (Director of Development Issues at the International Bureau) and Masanori Matsuo (Deputy Director of Development Issues at the International Bureau), to discuss the replenishment of CEPF by the Government of Japan. Iizuka is now representing the Government of Japan in the CEPF Donor Council.

Akiko Tabata (Deputy Director, Global Biodiversity Strategy Office, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment), who represents the Government of Japan in the CEPF Working Group, also participated in the meeting, as well as Yasushi Hibi (Vice-President of CI-Japan) and Atsuko Nishikawa (Senior Manager of CI-Japan).

The main objective was to present CEPF to the new team of the Ministry of Finance responsible for CEPF after the staff changes that happened in July 2015. This visit was a follow-up of a visit paid to the Ministry of Finance’s previous team in May 2015. It was particularly important to inform the Ministry of Finance of the complementarity between CEPF and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the same office in the Ministry of Finance covers both. It was also critical to demonstrate the impacts of CEPF to the achievement of the goals of global agendas, and in particular the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted last September by the United Nations.

After this meeting with the Ministry of Finance, Olivier gave a presentation about CEPF in a public session organized at the United Nations University in Tokyo. This session had simultaneous translation from English to Japanese, which was organized and facilitated by CI-Japan and the Ministry of the Environment.

In early December, Olivier visited the Moore Foundation in Palo Alto, California, to share with the Program Officers, Leonardo Fleck and Heather Wright, in charge of South America the draft ecosystem profile of the Cerrado biodiversity hotspot and discuss possible synergies and duplication avoidance between CEPF and the Moore Foundation since the Moore Foundation is about to invest \$78 million in the next five years to address deforestation in commodity supply chain in South America.



Olivier presenting CEPF at the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan. © CI-Japan

Update on Funding Applications

In August, CEPF was invited by the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation to submit a proposal for \$2.8 million towards the CEPF investment program in the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot. If successful, this proposal would represent a renewal and expansion of the Foundation's involvement as a regional donor in Indo-Burma, following a contribution of \$1.8 million in 2013. As well as building on successful initiatives in the Lower Mekong countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam, this investment will, for the first time, extend the Foundation's support to Myanmar, enabling CEPF to expand its grantmaking there at a critical time in the country's development.

In November, CEPF submitted the Project Document to the GEF Secretariat for CEO Endorsement for the full-sized GEF project titled "Effectively mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into government policy and private sector practice: Piloting sustainability models to take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to scale." Comments are expected in December and CEO Endorsement is expected by January 2016. This should allow CEPF to start using the grant funds in April 2016. For a detailed update, see document CEPF-DC28-9 in the packet of Donor Council meeting materials.



Boat on the Indawgyi River in Myanmar. © BirdLife International/photo by Andrew W. Tordoff

CEPF Working Group Meeting

A CEPF Working Group Meeting was organized on 17 November 2015 to review the draft ecosystem profiles of the Cerrado and the Guinean Forests of West Africa biodiversity hotspots, as well as a revised version of the paper on the governance of CEPF. Comments from Working Group members were collected and have been incorporated in the version of the documents that will be presented to the CEPF Donor Council in preparation for the session scheduled to take place in Brussels, Belgium, on 20 January 2016.

Grantees Assess Investment in the Eastern Afromontane and Caribbean Islands Hotspots

In July, the Secretariat and BirdLife International, in its capacity as the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) in the Eastern Afromontane, convened a mid-term assessment meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, for CEPF's \$9.8 million investment in the hotspot. Since the start of the investment in 2012, CEPF has funded 79 projects in 14 countries in the hotspot, with Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania as the countries that have received the largest amount of funding.

For the mid-term assessment, Fauna & Flora International (FFI) conducted an independent review, convening a team of senior advisors to review results in relation to the ecosystem profile, and gathering more than 50 grantee representatives for a day-long learning exchange. The RIT and grantees then moved directly into a broader capacity-building program led by FFI that was open to conservation NGOs from throughout Africa. Due to President Obama's visit to Kenya, the Donor Roundtable was cancelled and will be rescheduled.



Secretariat, RIT and RIT Advisory Board members meet at Lolldaiga Hills Ranch prior to the mid-term assessment for the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot. © Olivier Langrand

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During the first half of the investment period, CEPF and the RIT realized that successful conservation action in the Eastern Afromontane hotspot is hampered by insufficient capacity of national and local civil society agencies. To address this issue, the RIT supported a range of projects that trained local community organizations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Mozambique. The RIT also issued five specific ‘civil society capacity assessments’ for Yemen, Eritrea, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania. As a direct result of these reports, targeted training programs have already commenced in four of these countries. Only in Eritrea, the local situation proved too difficult for civil society to even be assessed, so the RIT decided to put the investment in that country temporarily on hold.

In early 2015, CEPF and the RIT designed a large-scale capacity development program for CEPF grantees. Implemented by FFI and the Tropical Biology Association (TBA), this program will train CEPF grantees in all aspects of project planning and implementation. A first training took place in Mbeya, Tanzania, in May 2015 for grantees from the five southernmost countries in the hotspot. The second major event was the mid-term assessment and capacity-building workshop in July. Throughout the remaining 2.5 years of CEPF’s engagement in the hotspot, at least seven more regional training workshops will be organized, as well as 10 site exchange visits. All CEPF grantees will also join the TBA network and will be supported to improve their skills through the TBA website.

In November, CEPF wrapped up a three-country consultation in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica as part of the final assessment of its five-year investment in the Caribbean Islands biodiversity hotspot. Olivier and Michele Zador, CEPF grant director for the hotspot, participated in the final assessment, which was a great opportunity not only to see the results of CEPF’s investment, but also an opportunity to share these results with the representatives of CEPF global donors active in this region, including AFD, the French Embassy, the European Union, the Japanese Embassy and the GEF, who were invited and actively participated in the different events and sessions.

The consultations brought together more than 100 people representing a broad cross-section of stakeholders — CEPF grantees, community beneficiaries, government partners and donor representatives — who agreed that CEPF’s investments achieved highly strategic gains across eight countries, leading CEPF to deem its investments in the hotspot as having achieved strong performance. The \$6.9 million portfolio provided 30 sites with stronger management, achieving tangible gains for both biodiversity and the communities that depend on their ecosystem services.



Gilles Genre-Grandpierre (second from the right), mission director for AFD in the Dominican Republic, at the final assessment workshop. © CI/photo by Antonia Cermak-Terzian

CEPF grantees introduced innovative conservation approaches in the hotspot, including the Caribbean’s first forest carbon project, the Dominican Republic’s first private protected area and Haiti’s first municipal reserve. Equally noteworthy, CEPF strengthened 46 Caribbean-based civil society groups, several of which have since accessed new donor funding as a result of CEPF support. Read more about the final assessment workshop [here](#).

Biodiversity Hotspot Photo Exhibit Displayed Around the World

The “Wonders of the World” exhibit — developed by Terre Sauvage magazine, the Nature Picture Library and CEPF, and presented in partnership with Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux - LPO, l’Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et Européennes — continues to attract visitors around the world.

In July, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), in collaboration with Gold Trophy, launched the exhibit, featuring stunning photos of the landscapes and species found in the biodiversity hotspots, in Batroun, Lebanon.

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Assad Serhal, SPNL's director general, accompanied by Ghassan Sayah, adviser to Lebanon's Environment Minister, and Henri Bou Obied, Gold Trophy's chairman, opened the exhibit, which brought together key biodiversity stakeholders in Lebanon and the Romanian Ambassador to Lebanon, Victor Mircea.

In September, the exhibit opened in Montenegro at the Petrović Palace, where it remained on display for two months. During this time, CEPF grantee the Center for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro (CZIP) guided more than 2,500 students from Montenegrin primary and high schools through the exhibition.

The exhibit also remains on display through December at the Beaty Biodiversity Museum at the University of British Columbia, Canada.



Students viewing the World Wonders exhibit on display in Montenegro. © CDM

CEPF Reviews Implementation of Safeguard Policies

CEPF recently completed its first comprehensive review of implementation of safeguard policies, covering the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2014. During this period, 219 large and small grant projects triggered 275 safeguards.

Read the report [here](#).

Communications Corner: Compelling stories from the biodiversity hotspots

CEPF recently produced multiple stories focusing on the productive efforts of civil society to conserve biodiversity in the hotspots.

The Mediterranean Basin: A Storymap

This mapping tool demonstrates how nature can be protected by targeted funding and the drive of impassioned local conservationists. Explore the map [here](#).



Mediterranean Basin storymap © BirdLife International

CEPF Celebrates its 2,000th Grantee: NatureUganda

In this interview, NatureUganda's Programme Manager Michael Opige talks about the goal of sustainably managing oil and gas exploration in Uganda's Albertine Rift Region. Read the story [here](#).



Members of the NatureUganda biodiversity team during seismic biodiversity sensitivity mapping. © NatureUganda

Across the Hotspots: A Malagasy Perspective on Biodiversity Conservation in India's Western Ghats

In this blog, Rijarivony Andriamasimanana from the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands RIT shares his thoughts on his experience at the final assessment workshop in the Western Ghats, where sustainable financing solutions are being tested. Read the story [here](#).

Updates on Profiling

Cerrado

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2016, the CI-Brazil and Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza (ISPN) team preparing the Cerrado Ecosystem Profile concluded the definition and prioritization process for the hotspot's key biodiversity areas (KBAs), following the outcomes of the consultation workshops.

CI-Brazil and ISPN also finished drafting the remaining chapters and submitted the first draft to CEPF in early September. Comments from the Secretariat were then incorporated into a new draft, which was submitted to CEPF for final review before the final consultation workshop that was scheduled in mid-October.

Guinean Forests of West Africa

The final consultation for the hotspot's ecosystem profile consisted of two separate workshops that were held in Monrovia, Liberia, (27-28 August) and in Limbe, Cameroon, (2-3 September) for the Upper and Lower Guinean Forests sub-regions respectively. More than 50 senior stakeholders attended and successfully reached a broad consensus regarding the CEPF investment strategy for the hotspot. Olivier and Peggy Poncelet, CEPF grant director, participated in the workshop focused on the lower Guinean part of the hotspot and the islands of the Gulf of Guinea. This was an opportunity for Olivier to see how the CEPF stakeholder consultations work in the context of drafting an ecosystem profile, including determining identification of the strategic directions, and defining priority corridors and KBAs.



Final stakeholder consultation workshop in Limbe, Cameroon. © CI/photo by Peggy Poncelet

From the Field

Caribbean Islands

Climate Finance and Park Management in the Dominican Republic

In an effort to better position CEPF grantees working in the Dominican Republic to secure future funding for the Caribbean Island's conservation outcomes, CEPF grantees and partners developed "A Plan Of Action: Capacity Building to Access Climate Finance in Order to Conserve Critical Ecosystems in the Context of Climate Change." Grantees met in September and agreed on the next steps required by conservation organizations to acquire the necessary skills for accessing climate finance in order to promote conservation in critical ecosystems.

Also in the Dominican Republic, CEPF grantees Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispaniola (SOH) and Instituto Dominicano de Desarrollo Integral (IDDI) worked closely with Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to prepare a management plan for Bahoruco Oriental KBA. Prior to CEPF



Bahoruco Oriental watershed. © Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispaniola/photo by Jorge Brocca

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engagement, Bahoruco Oriental received very little attention from the government. It now has park management infrastructure, personnel and a management plan, as well as the ability to call attention to the site and to leverage new support, as a result of CEPF funding.

East Melanesian Islands

Advancing a Conservation Strategy for the Uplands of Guadalcanal

In September, the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), in partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP) Institute of Applied Science and the Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership, began a month-long biological survey of the Solomon Islands' Guadalcanal Watersheds KBA. Guadalcanal is the highest mountain island in the Pacific, and this expedition is the first biological survey of the area's unique species found nowhere else in the world. The expedition also served as a capacity building opportunity, with many early-career scientists from the Solomon Islands working with experienced biologists from the region and from international institutions.

The findings are expected to help guide conservation policy and provide the scientific basis for informed decision-making. Following the expedition, the Solomon Islands' Deputy Prime Minister pledged his government's support for the creation of a legally protected area in the expedition site. Read more [here](#).

The project also led to the signing of a historic agreement for the Uluna-Sutahari tribe of Malango in central Guadalcanal, in collaboration with AMNH, USP and the Solomon Islands Government, to plan and implement the Bobosogo biodiversity surveys within their customary lands. This is strengthening the tribe's customary relationship with their traditional dwelling areas. Learn more [here](#).

Eastern Afromontane

Rehabilitation and Sustainable Utilization of Ethiopia's Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2016, Bahir Dar University completed a management plan for rehabilitating and sustainably utilizing Ethiopia's Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands, which feeds Lake Tana and provides important habitat for birds. The wetlands are also home to hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), Eastern black-and-white colobus (*Colobus guereza*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and African civet (*Civettictis civetta*), as well as 730,000 people who are primarily rural farmers.

The management plan prescribes a mapping of socioeconomic and biophysical resources; establishing rapport and creating awareness among different stakeholders; rehabilitation of degraded wetland through planting papyrus and other appropriate vegetation; and promotion of improved livelihoods through establishment of fish cooperatives and providing training in papyrus craft production.

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This is one of the first-ever photos of a male moustached kingfisher (currently classified as *Actenoides bougainvillei excelsus*). © R. Moyle



Inception workshop to kick off Bahir Dar University's project for Ethiopia's Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands. © Bahir Dar University

In September, Bahir Dar University held an inception workshop to kick off the project, with more than 70 participants gathering to provide feedback on the management plan.

Indo-Burma

Core Capacity Building for Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden, Lao PDR

In Lao PDR, wild plants play a significant role in people's diet, healthcare and culture. CEPF is providing core support to the development of Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden, Lao's first civil society organization dedicated to the study and conservation of plants, with the aim of assisting in its emergence as a national center for botanical research and education. Over the past few months, experts from botanical gardens across the Asia Pacific Region have volunteered their time to visit Pha Tad Ke and share their knowledge.

The Sydney Royal Botanical Garden organized a training for Pha Tad Ke's Botanical Garden staff and students from a local forestry college on horticulture and plant care; the Singapore Botanic Garden organized training on the use of the IRIS Botanical Garden Database system, which will help Pha Tad Ke to better organize its data and communicate with partner institutions and the public; and in September Pha Tad Ke did a field trip with botanists from the Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden and students from the National University of Laos.



AFD staff visiting Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden. © Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden

In June, a group of 30 staff from AFD's headquarters in Paris led by the new Regional Director Philippe Steinmetz, visited Pha Tad Ke to learn more about the project and about the everyday reality of working in the field. This was a good opportunity for AFD staff to see the work of a CEPF grantee with the potential to develop into a national leader for conservation.

Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany

Umzimvubu Catchment Partnership Programme, South Africa

As grant funding in the hotspot comes to a close, the partnership to build local institutions, innovative strategies and financial sustainability for the restoration and conservation of the Upper Umzimvubu Catchment in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province continues. Conservation South Africa has created a partnership that includes six other NGOs and community-based organizations, the National Department of Water Affairs, the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Authority, and the Alfred Nzo District Municipality.

This partnership is a flagship of grassroots, science and policy coordination. Through the partnership, there is improved targeting of labor for land restoration provided by the Expanded Public Works Programme and there is agreement on areas critical for ecosystem-based adaptation. The municipality is measuring environmental goods and services in the context of ensuring climate resilience and is quantifying the values of restoration returns in terms of water and grazing services. Overall, 14,500 hectares of land are under improved grazing services and more than 600 hectares of alien invasive plant species have been removed.



View of the Umzimvubu reaching the Indian Ocean at Port St. Johns. © CI/photo by Julie Shaw

Mediterranean Basin

Environmental Education in the Moroccan Atlas

In Morocco, CEPF support to the Association Marocaine pour l'Ecotourisme et la Protection de la Nature (AMEPN) and Fédération Marocaine de Pêche de Loisir (FMPL) is supporting efforts to preserve the water basin, introduce best practices for leisure fishing and raise awareness about the ecological importance of the Moroccan Atlas.

In Ifrane National Park, AMEPN created Morocco's first school for environment and ecotourism education. In September, all students attending 43 of the country's public schools were subscribed to a program allowing each class to spend three days per year in the environmental school in order to better understand biodiversity and water resource conservation. An after-school manual was also produced for use in the curriculum. The school also plays an important role in educating fishermen, leading to collaboration among civil society, relevant stakeholders and the local fishermen who are supervising recreational fishing through FMPL.



Ifrane National Park, Morocco. © LPO/photo by Awatef Abiadh

Developing a Long-Term Vision for the Mediterranean Basin

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2016, the long-term vision process was launched for the Balkans Sub-Region. The University of Ljubljana and BirdLife Slovenia (DOPPS) have been contracted to lead the consultation process for the long-term vision, supported by former European Commissioner for Environment, Janez Potočnik. The team continued consultations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania in October and November, and a regional workshop is taking place in December in Slovenia.

Western Ghats

Addressing the Impacts of Linear Intrusion on Wildlife

In September, the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), in partnership with the Organization for Social Action and Improvement (OSAI), held a consultative meeting on the impact of linear intrusions on wildlife in the Western Ghats Region of India. More than 30 participants came together, including officials from Kerala Forest Department and Tamil Nadu Forest Department, as well as representatives from railways and roads, conservationists and researchers, to discuss the way forward towards developing a mitigation plan.

The meeting also aimed to strengthen policy guidelines for avoiding, reducing and mitigating the negative impacts of linear intrusion on wildlife, as the mortality of animals and fragmentation of habitat due to linear intrusions has become a major concern in the region. Read more [here](#).



An elephant crossing the road in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. © Sandeep Kr Tiwari/WTI

Updates on New Investments

Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands

In July, CEPF issued a call for letters of inquiry for small grants for organizations wishing to work in Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and Seychelles for Strategic Directions 1, 2 and 3. The RIT received 225 letters of inquiry and is currently reviewing these.

Tropical Andes

In August, CEPF launched its new \$10 million, five-year investment in the Tropical Andes, building on the results achieved and lessons learned from CEPF's previous investments in this hotspot from 2001 to 2006 and from 2009 to 2013. Key personnel from the FUNDESNAAP-led RIT visited the CEPF Secretariat in Arlington, Virginia, in mid-August to participate in training on CEPF policies and operations. They learned about the various aspects of launching the new portfolio and met with a variety of environmental groups and donors working in the hotspot.



Secretariat staff meet with key personnel from the FUNDESNAAP-led RIT. © CI/photo by Laura Johnston

Wallacea

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2016, Burung Indonesia, in its capacity as the RIT for the hotspot, solicited small grant applications and prepared six small grant awards. These grants are all to local civil society organizations working in northern Sulawesi, two islands further north (Sangihe and Talaud), and on Seram (Maluku) addressing issues of species conservation — including dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) — and improving the management of existing protected areas.

In July, CEPF issued a call for letters of inquiry for large grants only for organizations wishing to work in or affect the key biodiversity areas and species in the Sangihe Talaud and Northern Sulawesi Marine Corridor, and/or the Seram and Buru Marine Corridor for Strategic Directions 1, 2 3 and 4. The Secretariat is currently negotiating four large grants, each around \$100,000.

Featured New Grant

Towards a Blueprint for Locally-Managed Marine Conservation in the Comoros: Building the Knowledge Base and Capacity for Monitoring and Management — Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands

In September, Blue Ventures Conservation received a two-year, \$149,846 grant to work on improving the knowledge base for the Bimbini Key Biodiversity Area on Anjouan Island in the Comoros. Here, the marine biodiversity remains largely undocumented, while threats are increasing, including pressure from fishing. Blue Ventures and their local partner organizations Dahari and UMAMA will identify better management practices for local fishing communities based on what has been tried and tested by Blue Ventures with coastal communities in Madagascar. The project aims to set the scene for the first locally managed marine protected area in the Comoros.

CEPF Upcoming Travel Schedule

Please join CEPF for any of our upcoming field visits, which provide good opportunities to meet our grantees and learn about CEPF in the field. Contact Olivier Langrand if you are interested in joining any of the following trips:

January 2016

- 23-February 6, Regional Implementation Team Supervision Mission, Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands – Madagascar

February 2016

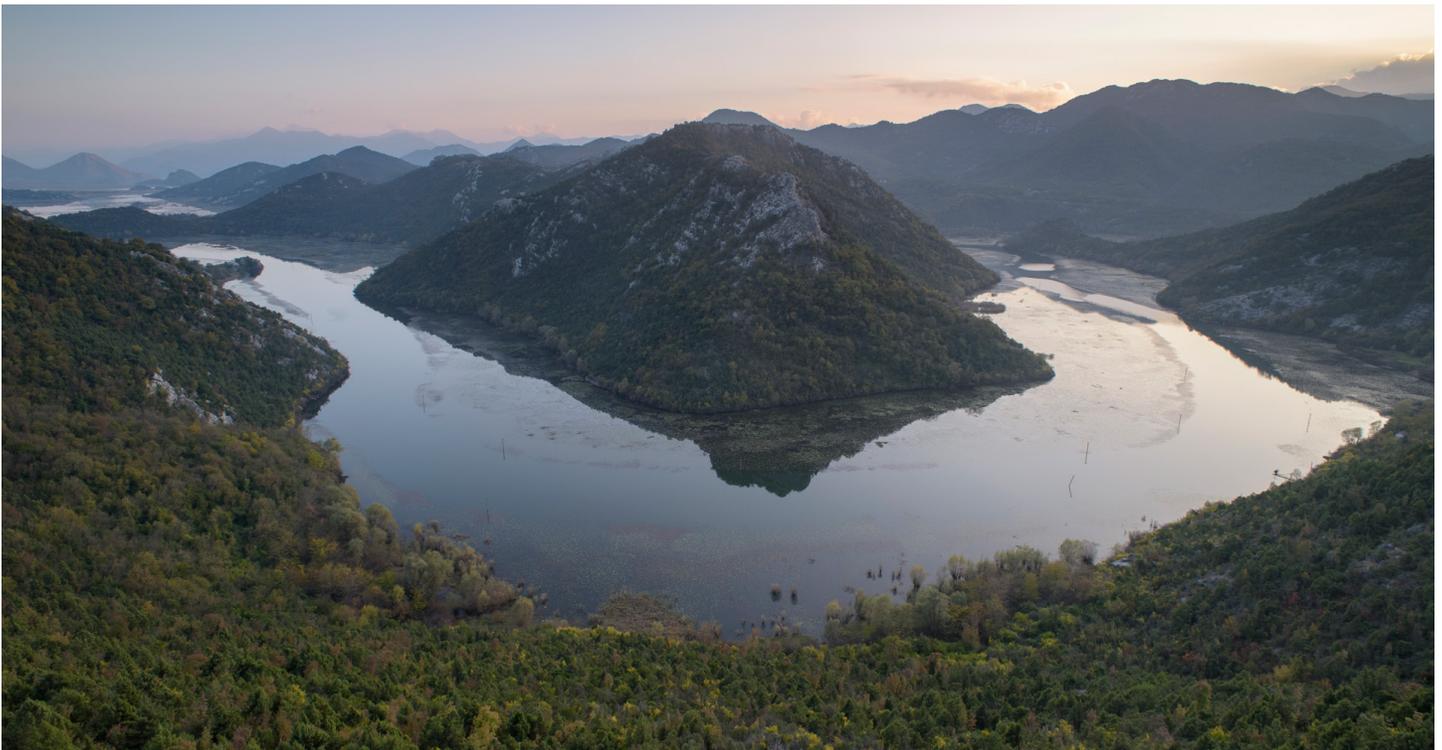
- 5-15, Supervision Mission, Eastern Afromontane – Kenya and Ethiopia
- 10-March 5 (TBC), Supervision Mission, East Melanesian Islands – Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu
- 29-March 13, Supervision Mission, Wallacea – Indonesia

March 2016

- 1-15, Supervision Mission, Indo-Burma – Cambodia and Myanmar

April 2016

- TBD, Supervision Mission, Mediterranean Basin – Lebanon



Skadar Lake, the largest lake in the Balkan Peninsula. © Jaime Rojo/The Living Med

Financial Narrative

General

The detailed financial report for the three months of FY16 through 30 September 2015 is included in the following pages. In brief summary:

- Total expenses are 5% of the Spending Plan.
 - Operational expenses are 19%;
 - New Preparation grants are yet to be committed;
 - Special Projects are 6%, with the majority of spending on the new CEPF grant system to occur during Q3-Q4;
 - Grantmaking is 1% as a result of the schedule of call for proposals in various regions, resulting in CEPF planning to grant 88% of its target in Q4.
- The balance available for investment based on secured funds is negative by \$529,635, due mainly to the losses incurred on the foreign currency exchange rate changes on the unpaid balance of the European Union (EU) commitment. This temporary loss situation will reverse once new donor agreements are signed, such as with the Government of Japan through the World Bank as trustee.
- CEPF is still in a strong cash positive situation with cash and investments on hand of approximately \$38 million.

Revenue

CEPF has received contributions during the fiscal year from:

- The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation of \$1.0 million in support of investments in the Wallacea biodiversity hotspot.

Although the foreign exchange rate between the US dollar and the Euro has moved in CEPF's favor during the quarter, the cumulative effect of exchange rates on the unpaid balance of the contribution from the EU is a loss of \$3.0 million. This loss has impacted the balance available for investment to CEPF, but will be mitigated by the pending contributions from the Government of Japan through the World Bank as trustee, the Global Environment Facility through Conservation International as the project agency, and from Conservation International's pledge for Phase 3 announced during the quarter.

Grantmaking

CEPF anticipates committing 88% of its grantmaking budget during Q4 of FY16 as a result of the schedule of call for proposals in multiple regions. As a result, very few new awards are reported to date this fiscal year. Main observations on grantmaking for the year are:

- CEPF committed total new grants of \$203,620, or 1% of the budgeted \$16,600,000;
- Payments on grants are 39% of the Spending Plan forecast of \$12,505,375.

Operational Costs

CEPF has spent 19% or \$668,560 of the Total Operations and Management Costs budget of \$3,437,953 for the year.

Financial Narrative

Preparation/Ecosystem Profiles

CEPF has budgeted \$350,000 to support the Long-Term Visions strategy in FY16. CEPF has not yet signed awards for this work to begin.

Special Projects

The Special Projects budget is supported by interest earned through CEPF's bank accounts and investments. The priorities funded this year through the Special Projects budget of \$604,761 are the audit fee; fundraising and special events; and an upgrade to CEPF's grants management system (work in progress to be operational in September 2016). Actual expenditures on Special Projects total \$35,809, representing 6% spent. The majority of payments related to the upgrade of the grants management system will occur in Q3-Q4.

CEPF Investments

As approved by the Donor Council in June 2014, \$30 million of surplus cash was transferred into a conservative bond portfolio, managed by the Arbor Group at UBS. The investment strategy is to hold the securities until maturity; as a result, the focus is on the accrued interest (net of fees) rather than the changes in market value. As of 30 June 2015, the interest earned and accrued (net of fees) is \$278,682.

CEPF Quarterly Report
Income Statement for 3 Months Ending 09/30/15

<i>Revenue - CEPF</i>	Current Year
Contributions	1,128,745
Gain/(Loss) on EU Foreign Exchange ¹	128,745
Regional Donors ⁷	1,000,000
Bank Interest Earned	95,994
Total Revenue	1,224,738

<i>Grants by region</i>	Grants Awarded³ 07/01/15 - 09/30/15			Payments on Grants⁴ 07/01/15 - 09/30/15		
	FY16 Approved Spending Plan	Actual YTD⁹	%	FY16 Approved Spending Plan	Actual YTD	%
Caribbean	-	(35,368)	0%	877,054	479,270	55%
Caucasus	-	-	0%	21,875	-	0%
Cerrado	1,000,000	-	0%	125,000	-	0%
East Melanesian Islands	2,500,000	-	0%	1,278,386	228,400	18%
Eastern Afromontane	2,500,000	-	0%	2,202,006	1,177,804	53%
Eastern Arc Mountains & Coastal Forests	-	-	0%	42,323	6,667	16%
Guinean Forests of West Africa Reinvestment	1,500,000	-	0%	187,500	-	0%
Indo-Burma Reinvestment	1,500,000	-	0%	2,637,240	698,611	26%
Madagascar & Indian Ocean Islands Reinvestment	2,500,000	149,846	6%	762,500	433,985	57%
Maputoland-Pondoland-Albany	-	-	0%	346,222	41,700	12%
Mediterranean	600,000	(10,190)	-2%	2,531,077	1,154,996	46%
Mountains of Southwest China	-	-	0%	14,176	-	0%
Tropical Andes Reinvestment	2,500,000	-	0%	537,500	437,073	81%
Wallacea	2,000,000	100,000	5%	622,442	124,443	20%
Western Ghats & Sri Lanka	-	(668)	0%	320,074	69,598	22%
Total Grants	16,600,000	203,620	1%	12,505,375	4,852,546	39%

<i>Operational Costs</i>	Spending plan	Actual YTD	%
Operating Costs	2,854,258	555,069	19%
Management Fee	583,695	113,491	19%
Total Operations	3,437,953	668,560	19%

<i>Preparation</i>			%
Total Preparation	350,000	-	0%

<i>GEF-PPG</i>			%
Total PPG²	-	75,105	0%

<i>Special Projects</i>			%
Audit Fee	45,000	-	0%
Fundraising & Special Events	119,761	4,679	4%
New CEPF Grant System ⁵	440,000	31,130	7%
Total Special Projects	604,761	35,809	6%

Total Expense	20,992,714	983,093	5%
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Fund Balance at 09/30/15

Bank Balance	7,936,237
Investments ⁶	30,278,682
Accounts Receivable ⁸	11,900,207
European Union	9,727,857
Global Environment Facility (CI Project Agency) ²	171,136
The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust	600,000
Margaret A. Cargill Foundation	1,260,000
Mava Foundation	141,214
Grants Payable	(18,518,623)
Operating Expenses (due to)/from CI	(566,822)
Total Fund Balance	31,029,683

¹ Gain/(Loss) on Foreign Exchange: Due to foreign exchange rate change applied to the unpaid contribution from the EU (entrusted to the WB) from June 30, 2015 to September 30, 2015 of 1.1094 to 1.1243. Total multi-year change is a loss of \$2,964,180.62.

² Global Environment Facility (CI Project Agency): Contribution in FY15 of \$200k was for Project Preparation Grant (not included in the Spending Plan), ended September 30, 2015. \$125k was spent in FY15, and the remainder was spent in FY16 Q1.

³ Grants Awarded: Negative amounts represent grant deobligations.

⁴ Payments on Grants: Includes payments on grants awarded in prior years.

⁵ Upgrade of CEPF grant management system approved by Donor Council in January 2014.

⁶ Investments: \$30M transferred to UBS investment account in December 2014.

⁷ Regional Donors: The Margaret A. Cargill Foundation (\$1.0M) for Wallacea.

⁸ Accounts Receivable, Dates & Amounts: Helmsley (01/31/16 - \$300k; 01/31/16 - \$300k); Cargill (\$260k received 10/14/15; 12/01/15 - \$1.0M); Mava (02/28/16 - \$141k). All other funders are invoiced based upon quarterly cash advance requests.

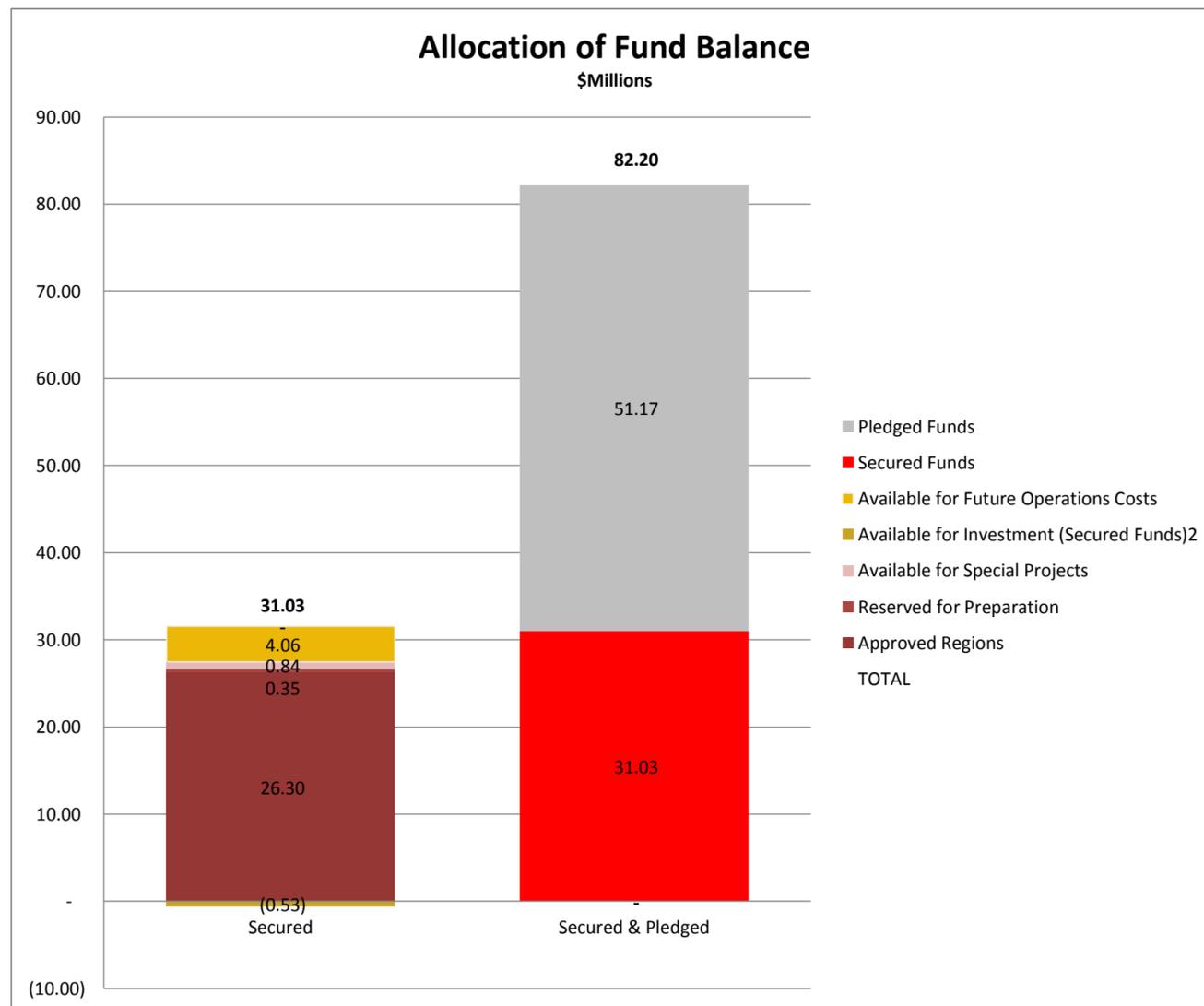
⁹ Grants Awarded, Actual YTD: CEPF plans on committing 88% of grants in Q4 as a result of the business cycle for Call for Proposals.

Summary of Available Resources as of 09/30/15

Revenue to Date	270,643,046	
Expenses to Date	239,612,725	
Fund Balance		31,030,321
Allocated to:		
Reserved for Preparation	350,000	
Approved Regions	26,303,408	
Available for Future Operations Costs	4,061,399	
Available for Special Projects	844,510	
Available for Investment (Secured Funds) ²		(528,996)
Pledged Funds ¹		
Operations Costs on Pledged Funds	51,173,000	
Preparation	7,675,950	
Preparation	500,000	
Balance for Investment (Pledged Funds)		42,997,050
Total Available for Investment - secured and pledged funds		42,468,054
Total Available Resources - secured and pledged funds		82,203,321

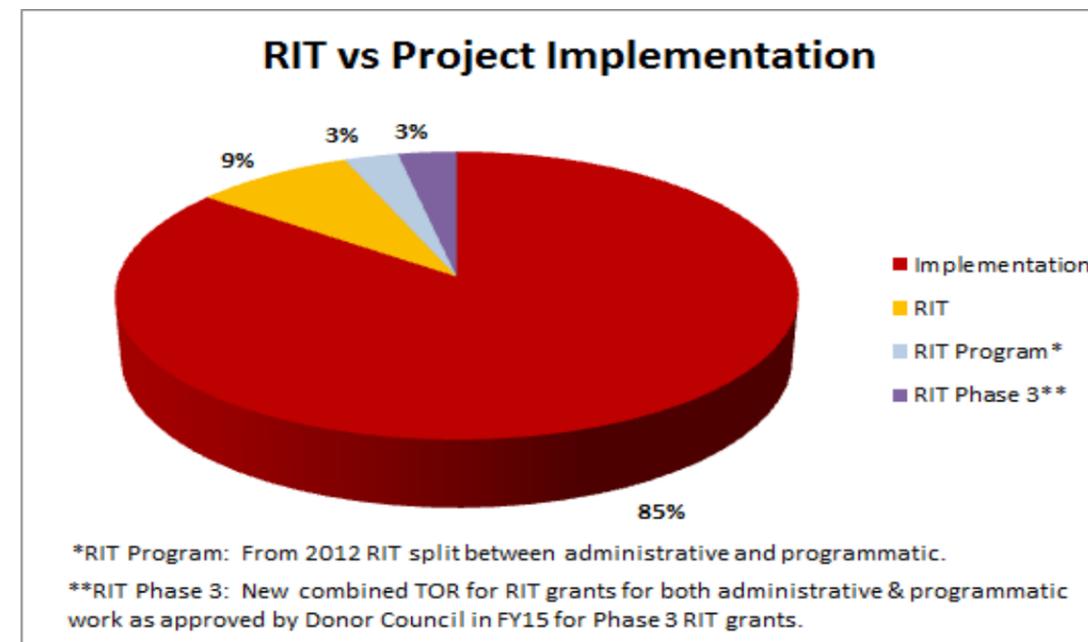
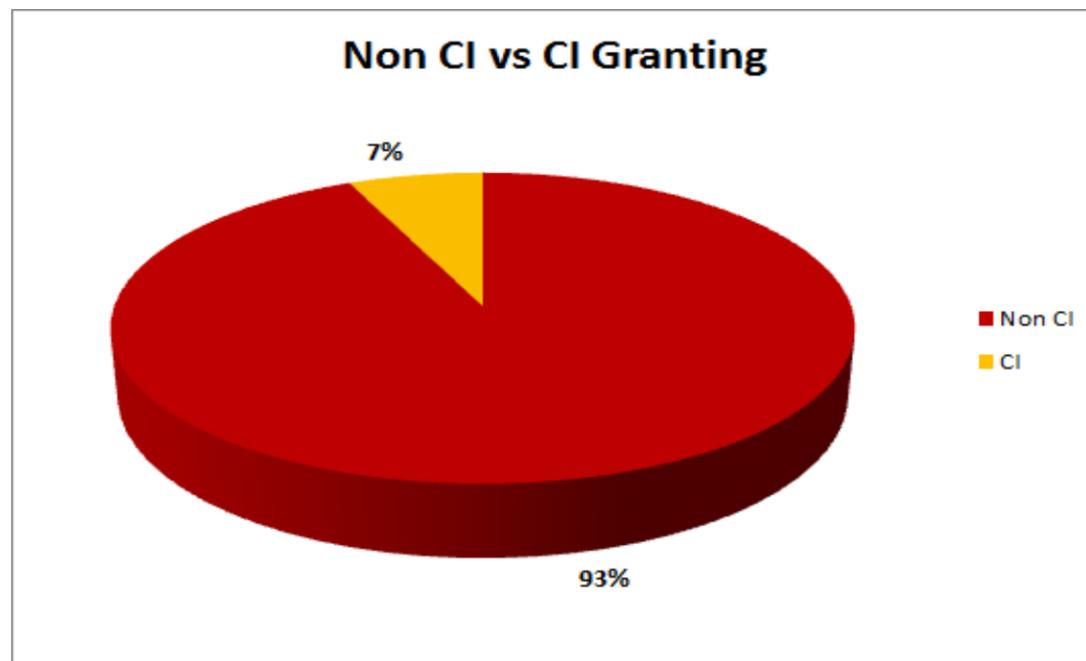
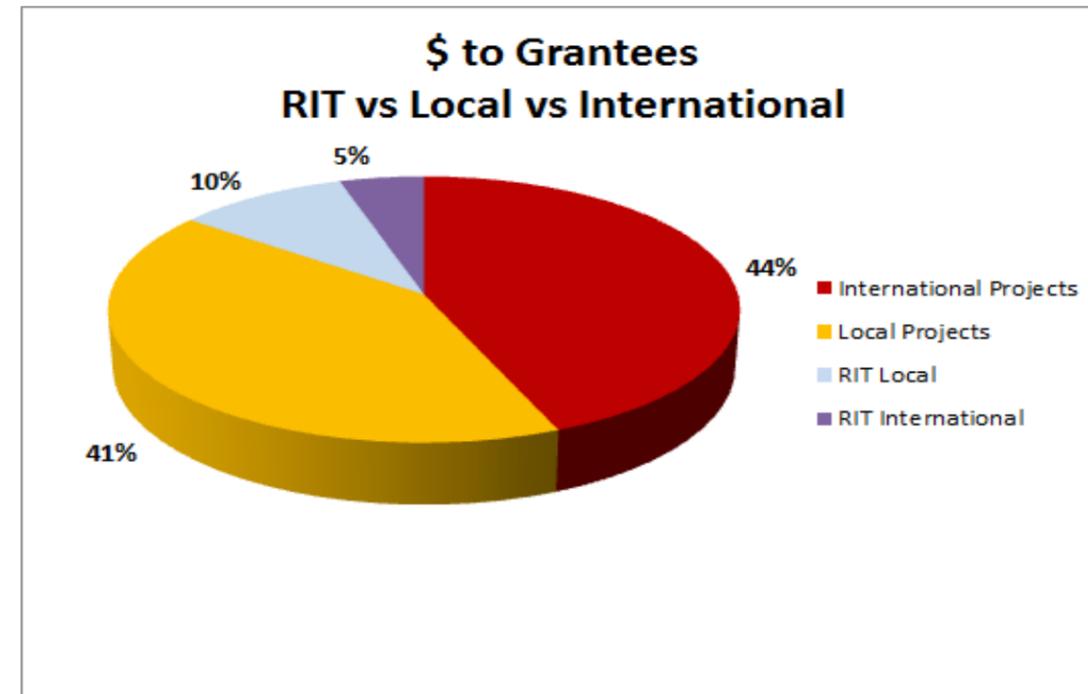
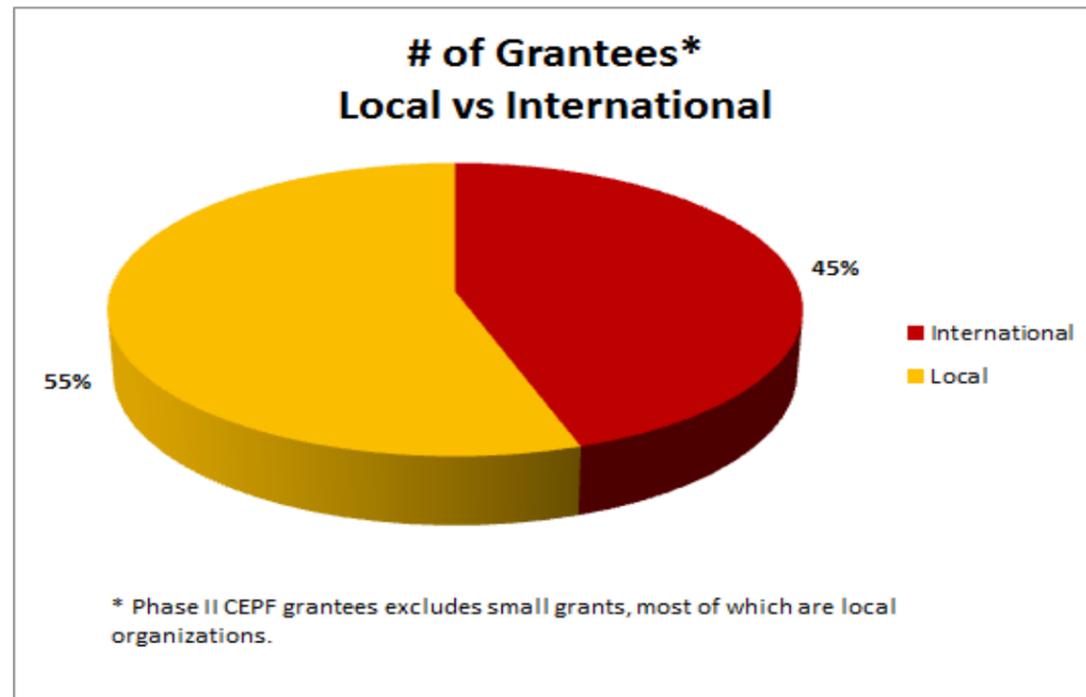
¹ Includes \$14,813,000 from the Government of Japan; \$1,560,000 from The World Bank; \$9,800,000 from the Global Environment Facility; and \$25,000,000 from CI.

² The secured funds available for investment are in a temporary deficit, with the multi-year currency loss on the EUR a major factor. This will reverse as soon as the new agreements are signed from the pledged funds listed in footnote 1.



CEPF Phase II Grant Portfolio as of 09/30/15

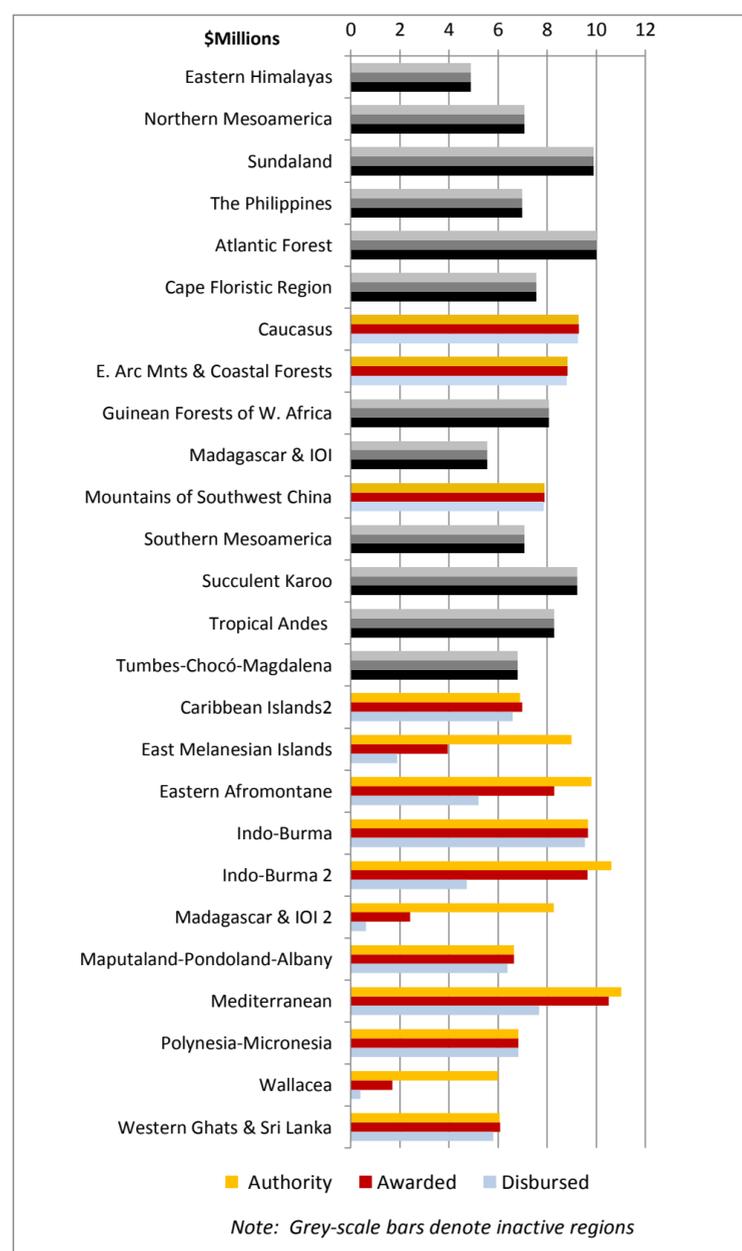
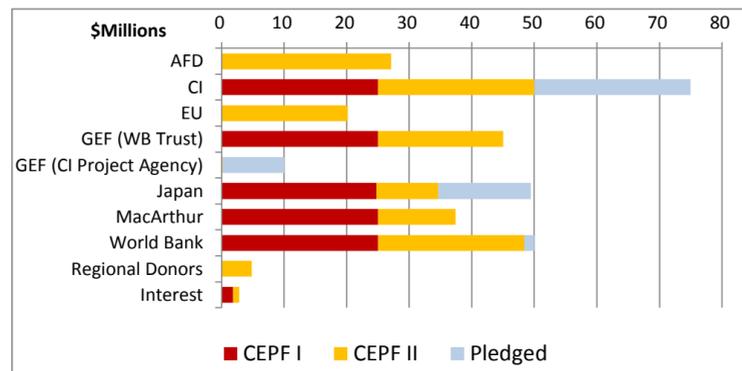
Number of Grantees:	487
Amount Granted (US \$000s):	\$ 92,935



CEPF Quarterly Report
Income Statement from Inception to 09/30/15 (US \$000s)

Revenue	CEPF I	CEPF II	Total	Pledged
l'Agence Française de Développement	0	27,117	27,117	0
Conservation International	25,000	25,000	50,000	25,000
European Union	0	20,191	20,191	0
Global Environmental Facility (WB Trust)	25,000	20,000	45,000	0
Global Environmental Facility (CI Project Agency)	0	200	200	9,800
Government of Japan	24,750	9,875	34,625	14,813
MacArthur Foundation	25,000	12,425	37,425	0
The World Bank	25,000	23,440	48,440	1,560
Regional Donors ¹	0	4,830	4,830	0
Interest earned	1,871	944	2,815	0
Total Revenue to Date	126,621	144,022	270,643	51,173

Expense	CEPF I	CEPF II	Total	Total	CEPF II
Grants by region	Awarded	Awarded	Awarded	Disbursed	Balance
CEPF I only					
Eastern Himalayas	4,883	0	4,883	4,883	0
Northern Mesoamerica	7,079	0	7,079	7,079	0
Sundaland	9,901	0	9,901	9,901	0
The Philippines	6,970	0	6,970	6,970	0
CEPF I and CEPF II consolidation					
Atlantic Forest	7,615	2,395	10,010	10,010	0
Cape Floristic Region	5,966	1,585	7,551	7,551	0
Caucasus	8,298	998	9,295	9,252	0
E. Arc Mnts & Coastal Forests	7,064	1,749	8,812	8,787	0
Guinean Forests of W. Africa	6,165	1,907	8,073	8,073	0
Madagascar & IOI	4,170	1,386	5,556	5,556	0
Mountains of Southwest China	6,535	1,351	7,886	7,863	0
Southern Mesoamerica	5,411	1,636	7,047	7,047	0
Succulent Karoo	7,834	1,387	9,221	9,221	0
Tropical Andes	6,130	2,157	8,287	8,287	0
Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena	4,952	1,846	6,798	6,798	0
Consolidation (unallocated)	0	0	0	0	26
CEPF II only					
Caribbean Islands ²	0	6,984	6,984	6,605	(84)
East Melanesian Islands	0	3,953	3,953	1,885	5,047
Eastern Afromontane	0	8,290	8,290	5,198	1,510
Indo-Burma	0	9,657	9,657	9,539	0
Indo-Burma 2	0	9,648	9,648	4,735	973
Madagascar & IOI 2	0	2,424	2,424	616	5,841
Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany	0	6,646	6,646	6,383	4
Mediterranean	0	10,515	10,515	7,678	501
Polynesia-Micronesia	0	6,829	6,829	6,829	0
Tropical Andes Reinvestment	0	1,800	1,800	437	8,200
Wallacea	0	1,699	1,699	394	4,301
Western Ghats & Sri Lanka ²	0	6,093	6,093	5,813	(16)
Total Grants to Date	98,974	92,935	191,909	173,390	26,303
Other Expenses to Date					
Preparation	6,714	3,760	10,474		
GEF-PPG	0	200	200		
Special Projects	349	1,622	1,971		
Operations Costs	17,659	17,400	35,059		
Total Other Expenses to Date	24,722	22,982	47,704		
Total Expense	123,695	115,917	239,613		
Fund Balance			31,030		



¹ Regional donors include Margaret A Cargill Foundation for Indo Burma Reinvestment and Wallacea; Mava Foundation for the Mediterranean; and The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust for Madagascar & Indian Ocean Islands.

² Caribbean Islands & Western Ghats are temporarily overspent against Spending Authority and will reverse on deobligations.



Approved Grants

From: July 01, 2015 To: September 30, 2015

East Melanesian Islands

Strategic Direction 4. Increase local, national and regional capacity to conserve biodiversity through catalyzing civil society partnerships

Training in Cost-Benefit Analysis for Managing Invasive Alien Species

Provide the fundamental skills necessary to undertake a cost-benefit analysis for managing invasive alien species in the East Melanesian Islands biodiversity hotspot. Conservation professionals within the hotspot will learn and practice the tools necessary during a three-day training course for successfully safeguarding priority globally threatened species by addressing major threats and information gaps, and successfully integrating biodiversity conservation into local land-use and development planning.

Funding: \$20,000
Grant Term: 7/1/2015 - 6/30/2016
Grantee: Landcare Research New Zealand, Ltd.
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

Eastern Afromontane

Strategic Direction 1. Mainstream biodiversity into wider development policies, plans and projects to deliver the co-benefits of biodiversity conservation, improved local livelihoods and economic development in priority corridors

Filling the Gap: Biodiversity Survey to Increase Long-Term Forest Sustainability in Sheka Forest Key Biodiversity Area, Ethiopia

Produce an inventory of biodiversity at the Sheka Forest Biosphere Reserve Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) in Ethiopia, including checklists of birds, mammals and amphibians, and identify priority sites within the KBA for enhanced protection. Deliver training to five local community representatives in monitoring and identifying birds, mammals and amphibians, and in nature guiding. Establish a research center and construct a protocol that can be used for researchers and tourists to visit the Biosphere Reserve. Share results and information via meetings, websites and tour operators, and feed results into the Biosphere Reserve management plan.

Funding: \$19,813
Grant Term: 7/1/2015 - 9/30/2016

Approved Grants—July-September 2015

Grantee: Biodiversity Inventory for Conservation
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

Strengthening Civil Society's Engagement with the Private Sector in the Eastern Afromontane

Facilitate participation of four CEPF grantees from the Eastern Afromontane biodiversity hotspot in the Pan-African Business and Biodiversity Forum in Ghana; organize a knowledge exchange meeting for grantees with projects in key biodiversity areas (KBAs) where the private sector also has operations and/or where there is an opportunity for green enterprise; and organize a side event to profile CEPF's engagement with the private sector, CEPF's broader commitment to KBA conservation and protection, and the mainstreaming of KBAs into policy and development planning.

Funding: \$19,775
Grant Term: 9/1/2015 - 2/29/2016
Grantee: Nature Uganda
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

Strategic Direction 2. Improve the protection and management of the key biodiversity area network throughout the hotspot

Bridging the Gap: Promoting the Integrity of Mt. Marsabit Forest Ecosystem through Community-Based Advocacy around Environment Safeguards, Kenya

Improve knowledge and awareness on the framework for environmental safeguards for Kenya's Mt. Marsabit Forest Ecosystem Key Biodiversity Area (KBA); promote community-based monitoring of projects to assess compliance with relevant environmental safeguards; improve synergies and networks/partnerships for promotion of environmental safeguards in the KBA; and improve the implementation and enforcement of policies and laws relating to environmental safeguards.

Funding: \$10,000
Grant Term: 9/1/2015 - 5/31/2016
Grantee: Saku Accountability Forum
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

Guide Biodiversity Conservation in the Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Areas of Uganda's Albertine Graben

Collate biodiversity data from the Murchison National Park, Uganda, that will guide the exploration and development of the oil and gas activities in the Albertine Graben area. Contribute in piloting the existing environment monitoring plan developed by the Uganda National Environment Management Authority to generate baseline data to monitor impacts of oil and gas activities. Disseminate the lessons from the work through a poster to the Civil Society Coalition on Oil and Gas (CSCO) and Uganda – Poverty and Conservation Learning Group (UPCLG).

Approved Grants—July-September 2015

Funding: \$10,000
Grant Term: 8/1/2015 - 7/31/2016
Grantee: Nature Uganda
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands

Strategic Direction 2. Enable civil society to mainstream biodiversity and conservation into policy making and business practices

Towards a Blueprint for Locally-Managed Marine Conservation in the Comoros: Building the Knowledge Base and Capacity for Monitoring and Management

Improve the knowledge base in biology and socio-economics for the Bimbini Key Biodiversity Area of Anjouan Island in the Comoros, an area threatened by fishing. Identify better management practices for the fishing communities, based on what has been tried and tested by Blue Ventures with coastal communities in Madagascar, and work towards establishing the first Locally Managed Marine Protected Area in the Comoros.

Funding: \$149,846
Grant Term: 10/1/2015 - 9/30/2017
Grantee: Blue Ventures Conservation

Mediterranean Basin

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

Evaluating the Status of the Monk Seal population in Lebanon

Initiate a conservation program for Critically Endangered Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) in collaboration with key national stakeholders and relevant marine conservation initiatives in the Mediterranean Basin. This small grant aims to better understand the status of this seal in Lebanon and make efforts to conserve the species across its range along the Lebanese coast. This will be achieved through partnership with local stakeholders and establishment of a Mediterranean-wide working group to coordinate efforts to conserve the species across its range.

Funding: \$4,500
Grant Term: 10/1/2015 - 4/30/2016
Grantee: Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL)
Notes: *Awarded by Regional Implementation Team*

CEPF-supported initiatives are often reported in news articles and magazine features. Below is a sampling of recent stories featuring CEPF. Click [here](#) to view all news about CEPF.

StarAfrica

[Mozambique's Gorongosa National Park hosts int'l symposium](#)

July 11, 2015

The Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique's central region is hosting an international symposium on the topic of "disruptive" conservation, which is billed as "a new model for building community driven conservation in some of the world's most remote and biologically diverse places, APA can report on Saturday. Organisers say in a media statement emailed to APA that the aim of the twelve day symposium which began on Saturday is to look at how people and ecosystems can thrive together on Mount Namuli.

The event is also aimed at bringing together forty university students, scientists and conservationists and will focus on conservation planning and management principles, leadership development models and "Leave No Trace" techniques, and will examine the challenges facing conservation and development.

Organisers say the initiative follows on from the work of Majka Burhardt, who in May 2014 led a team to remote Mount Namuli in Zambezia province, and its previously unexplored habitats.

That expedition discovered a new snake species, 40 ant genera and 27 herpetological specimens, many of which have yet to be identified.

Biologists and conservationists have identified Mount Namuli as a place of critical biodiversity.

According to Burhardt, the area "provides an opportunity to model a new vision for wildlife preservation that integrates the wishes and needs of local people."

"By bringing key conventional and unconventional players into the mix, we were able to create nimble, effective, and innovative solutions for conservation and development," Burhardt says.

"We are using the Symposium to make real time decisions and action plans for our next steps with Mount Namuli, that is disruptive conservation," he added.

The Lost Mountain Consortium receives financial support from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, which is a joint initiative of the French Development Agency (AFD), Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Japanese government, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank.



[Nqrihet zyra e informacionit turistik në zonën Vlorë-Nartë-Zvërnec](#)

July 14, 2015

by Nikolla Lena

TIRANË, 14 Korrik / ATSH/ – Shoqata për Ruajtjen dhe Mbrojtjen e Mjedisit Natyror në Shqipëri (PPNEA), në bashkëpunim me Agjensinë Kombëtare të Bregdetit (AKB) dhe Komunën Qendër – Vlorë, duke u mbështetur financiarisht prej Fondit të Partneritetit për Ekosistement e Kërcënuara (CEPF), bënë të mundur ndërtimin dhe hapjen e Zyrës së parë në shërbim të turizmit në zonën e Mbrojtur Vjosë – Nartë.

Zyra do të operojë përgjatë gjithë sezonit turistik. Ajo, aktualisht përfaqëson zyrën e vetme të këtij lloji në rrethin e Vlorës.

E vendosur në një pozicion mjaft të favorshëm, buzë rrugës kryesore Vlorë-Nartë-Zvërnec, do t'u shërbejë në radhë të parë turistëve të huaj dhe atyre vendas në dhënien e një informacioni profesional turistik, bizneseve të shumta të turizmit në zonë për promovimin e tyre, agjentëve të ndryshëm të turizmit për reklamimin e produkteve, si dhe komunitetit vendas për promovimin e vlerave turistike të zonës dhe produkteve ogrobujqësore si dhe të kulinarisë vendase./a.g/

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

The Association for the Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA), in cooperation with the National Agency Coast (KBA) and the Municipality of Centre - South, being funded by the Fund Partnership for Ekosistement of Threatened (CEPF), made possible the construction and opening of the first office in the service of tourism in the protected area Vjosa - Narta.

The office will operate throughout the tourist season. This currently represents the only office of its kind in the district of Vlora.

Located in a very favorable position, near the main road Vlora-Narta-Zvernec, the office will serve primarily foreign and local tourists, delivering professional tourist information, working with the many tourism businesses in the area to promote their tourism products, and engaging local communities for the promotion of the area and ogrobujqësore products and local culinary.



[Local rangers in the spotlight](#)

August 11, 2015

LOCAL rangers play a vital role in the sound stewardship of the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Solomon Islands, but have they been overlooked?

Media Clips—July-September 2015

Community based resource management, sustainable development and conservation efforts of Solomon Islands Rangers have flown 'under the radar' for too long. Rangers, with support of civil society, are taking steps to create training and resourcing possibilities.

Henry Kaniki of The Nature Conservancy, and Albert Kwatela of SI Community Conservation Partnership recently coordinated a meeting of Ranger and Ministry representatives, to develop a Constitution for Solomon Islands Rangers Association (SIRA), supported by and affiliated with the International Rangers Federation (IRF).

SIRA will be run by SI Rangers, and provide a platform for networking, training and development.

University of Queensland, with financial support of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund will shortly offer a training programme for Rangers—in-the-field through SINU.

Additional funding from 'the Thin Green Line', the charity arm of IRF, enables Red Cross First Aid Training as a component of the programme.

Outgoing AVI volunteer with SICCP, Annie Knappstein has been inspired by the work of under-resourced, 'invisible' Rangers, and their further potential to maintain ecological integrity at their community and island level, enforce legislation, as educators, researchers, a resource for appropriate national development planning and as tourism ambassadors and guides.

Annie will embark on a 1400km bike ride and walk across France and Spain from 3rd September, with a target of raising AUD20,000 to support SIRA train, equip and build the status of rangers.

All costs for the 'Ride and Stride for SI Rangers' are being met by her.

Funds are being raised through on-line crowdfunding, corporate sponsorship and individual donation, now and over the estimated 10 weeks of her trip.

Annie's contact with Tetepare, KIBCA (Kolombangara), Zaira (Vanganu), Biche (Gatokae) and Arnavon Rangers during her SICCP volunteer contract, made her acutely aware of the critical role they play in managing community resources in the face of logging, mining, expansion of subsistence and plantation agriculture, population increase, and impacts of climate change and variability.

SI businesses, NGO's, Government Ministries and individuals are encouraged to demonstrate their environmental responsibility and commitment by sponsoring Annie in support of SI Rangers.



[Game changer: How a local woman backed a global environmental fund](#)

August 12, 2015

by David Fuchs

In 2000, Tiburon resident Ann-Eve Hazen helped change global conservation history.

That year, Hazen, a longtime member of the Chairman's Council of Conservation International, a global environmental advocacy organization, gave the organization seed money for a new fund, one with a scope and vision that had never been tried before.

Media Clips—July-September 2015

“About 15 years ago, I decided on two things that mattered the most to me,” Hazen says. “Kids and environmental issues.”

Few, perhaps not even Hazen herself, could have predicted the impact of that decision.



BENJAMIN DRUMMOND / CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL



JOCELYN KNIGHT / FOR THE ARK



ANN-EVE HAZEN

Above (left), a woman works crops in Tanzania as part of a sustainable agricultural project; (right) Tiburon resident Ann-Eve Hazen. At left, Hazen helped James Wolfensohn (left), the former president of the World Bank, and Peter Seligmann, CEO of Conservation International, launch the Critical Environmental Partnership Fund in 2000.

The Critical Environmental Partnership Fund was the brain child of James Wolfensohn, then the president of the World Bank, and Peter Seligmann, the chairman of the board and CEO of Conservation International.

Wolfensohn and Seligmann’s idea was to get seven partner organizations to make a significant financial commitment to the fund as a mechanism for increasing the global capacity for doing conservation work.

Once they had secured the investment, the partner organizations would collectively decide how to use the fund’s resources to support civil society organizations in conserving some of the world’s most critical ecosystems, or hot spots.

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With partner organizations that included the World Bank, the European Union, the French Development Agency, the government of Japan, the Global Environmental Facility and the MacArthur Foundation, the fund's creation would mark a monumental victory for conservation efforts around the globe.

But in order to go toe-to-toe with such heavy hitters, Conservation International needed financial support in order to meet its share of the initial fund contribution.

It was then that Hazen stepped up and changed history.

"With a great belief that (Critical Environmental Partnership Fund) could improve the lives of countless individuals, organizations and leaders in places she might never visit, Ann-Eve had the courage to provide start-up funding," Seligmann says.

"It takes a special kind of person with great passion and a generosity of spirit to recognize the potential impact that a program like CEPF could have on the world," Seligmann says.

Today, Hazen's initial gift has sparked \$100 million more in investment funding and has led to the protection of tens of millions of acres around the world.

Collectively, Seligmann says that the fund that Hazen helped bring to life has supported "1,900 civil society organizations in over 23 critically important and biodiversity-rich regions around the world, helping communities to participate in, benefit from and ultimately influence conservation decisions that affect not only their lives and livelihoods, but the global environment.

"That's an exquisite example of philanthropy, a testament to Ann-Eve's vision, and the essence of who she is," Seligmann says.

Originally from Arizona, Hazen first became interested in environmental causes when she moved to California in her early 20s.

"In the '60s and '70s, the air in Los Angeles was horrible. You wouldn't want to go downtown," Hazen says.

Living in Long Beach, she encountered the pollution on a daily basis and began volunteering with a local organization, Stamp Out Smog.

Hazen remembers the experience as being "very grassroots," consisting of a few women organizers and an army of volunteers. She fell in with the ranks, making phone calls and writing letters with the goal of improving the air quality in the Los Angeles basin.

"That's where I learned that we individuals have a lot of power if we just speak up," she says, a lesson she says she would retain for the rest of her life.

When Hazen's children were born, her attention shifted from the environment to her family, but she never lost her volunteering ethic.

She made time to work with local organizations like KQED public media and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, but it wasn't until 15 years ago when a respected friend invited her to a Conservation International meeting that Hazen returned to the environmental arena.

She was immediately drawn to the organization's willingness to work across all economic and geographic levels, from remote villages to the offices of corporate executives, to create substantive change.

"They work with scientists, governments, corporations and local people," Hazen says. "They don't exclude anybody."

Hazen says she was hooked.

She attended more and more meetings, getting more “red up.” Soon, she says the way she understood environmental issues fundamentally began to change.

“I started thinking about air, but they taught me you can’t just isolate one thing,” she says. “Every plant, every animal is important in the ecosystem in order to keep things balanced.”

Judy Agnew, Conservation International’s Bay Area development officer, described Hazen as an ideal supporter.

“She’s a person who’s always learning, wants to be a student of the organizations she works with, and makes well-educated decisions with her giving,” Agnew says. “She’s the kind of person who likes to address a need when she sees it, and when she sees a great idea, she’s willing to step up and get it started.”

For Hazen, it came down to helping people.

“I do think it helps us when we get out of ourselves and think about people other than ourselves,” she says. “It’s much healthier.”

Closer to home, Hazen is also the founder of First Graduate, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that helps hundreds of low-income youth become the first in their families to graduate college.

“I used to think that you had to do things at a grand scale, that it wouldn’t work unless you had a large organization,” Hazen says. “But I learned that that’s not true. Just step out there and do it.”



[BNT congratulates the government on protecting The Bahamas' future](#)

September 2, 2015

- Minister Dorsett announces over 3 million hectares of protected land, near shore and marine environment



NASSAU, Bahamas -- In a remarkable demonstration of the Christie Administration’s commitment to the nation’s environment, Minister of the Environment and Housing, the Hon. Kenred Dorsett, has announced over 7 million acres of new protected marine areas.

“Today, we have set the foundation for the protection of approximately of 7.5 million acres (3 million hectares) of land, near shore and marine environment,” announced Dorsett on Monday, August 30th. “This includes the new San Salvador National Parks announced in April of this year.”

The government of The Bahamas, through the Ministry of the Environment and Housing, the Bahamas Environment Science & Technology Commission, the Bahamas Department of Marine Resources, and a dedicated team of conservation professionals from the Bahamas National Trust and The Nature Conservancy have been working to declare an expansion of marine protected areas of 2.5 million hectares. Thanks to support funding from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) the newly-protected areas announced last night have undergone scientific assessment as well as extensive community outreach to protect these areas.

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In 2008, The Bahamas announced its acceptance of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI) and reaffirmed the country's commitment to protecting at least twenty percent of their marine environments by the year 2020. "Today, as the current co-chair of the CCI Council and Minister responsible for the Environment," said Minister Dorsett, "I am here to announce with great pride and a sense of accomplishment that we are progressing steadily towards this 2020 target."

The new additions to the protected areas system are:

In Abaco:

The Marls of Abaco National Park
East Abaco Creeks National Park
Cross Harbour National Park
South Abaco Blue Holes National Park

In Crooked Island / Acklins:

Southeast Bahamas Marine Managed Area
Bight of Acklins National Park

In Andros:

Andros Green Cay National Park
The Joulter Cays National Park

The Cay Sal Marine Managed Area

In Grand Bahama:

The North Shore - The Gap National Park
East Grand Bahama National Park
Lucayan National Park Expansion
Peterson Cay National Park expansion (further consultations are being held with the key Grand Bahama stakeholders)
(All Grand Bahama parks exclude Grand Bahama Development Company holdings)

Hogsty Reef Protected Area

In Mayaguana:

Booby Cay National Park

In New Providence:

Southwest New Providence Marine Managed Area
Perpall Tract National Park

In Great Exuma:

Expansion of Moriah Harbour Cay National Park.

The Minister also wanted to dispel any concern regarding land rights associated with these new Marine Protected Areas and he stated that all private land will be excluded from the boundaries of the protected areas and the rights of landowners will not be infringed upon.

"Today is a great day for conservation in The Bahamas," said Eric Carey, BNT Executive Director. "The Bahamas continues to be a leader in the arena of protected area designation. Protected areas are an important to secure a



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sustainable future for the Bahamas.”



With this 2020 goal in mind, the government of The Bahamas, realizing the cost of managing protected areas, increased its subvention to the Bahamas National Trust in the 2015 budget. Additionally as part of the ‘Global Environmental Facility Full-Sized Project’ the government also implemented the Bahamas Protected Area Fund to help finance this huge commitment. The Bahamas is the first country in Caribbean Challenge Initiative to establish a legal trust fund for protected areas management.

Additionally, The BNT would like to thank the National Audubon Society, with whom they worked closely, to develop proposal of the Joulter Cays National Park. The process included comprehensive community and stakeholder consultation. Similarly, Island Conservation, with funding provided by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, supported the Booby Cay proposal process. Thanks also to Bonefish Tarpon Trust for providing both funding and scientific research to support the creation of some of the Grand Bahama and Abaco parks.

“The Bahamas National Trust is extremely pleased that the Government of The Bahamas has created these new national parks and marine protected areas,” said Larry Glinton, President of the BNT. “We are especially excited about the inclusion of Joulter Cays, which will provide much needed support to our thriving fly-fishing industry while also protecting the critical wintering habitat of several endangered shorebird species.”

Glinton went on to note that “the Joulter Cays also has tremendous potential as an area for ecotourism and can generate significant revenue from bird-based tourism. BNT and Audubon are presently developing a program that will allow local residents to take full advantage of these exciting new opportunities.” Joulter Cays has also been designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife international. BNT and Audubon are both BirdLife Partners.



The BNT wishes to note that this was a fully collaborative initiative at the national level with many government and NGO partners playing key roles. In addition to the entities listed above, BNT also acknowledges the support provided by FRIENDS of the Environment (Abaco), San Salvador Living Jewels, Nature’s Hope for Southern Andros, Andros Conservancy and Trust (ANCAT) and BREEF.

BNT is now committed to a process of further consultation with communities and key stakeholders to develop the management plans for ensuring the effective management of the areas entrusted to its responsibility. We look forward to continued support from the public to

ensure this is a success.

Maps of all of the new areas will shortly be posted on the BNT’s website at www.bnt.bs.

Photo 1: Wardens Anwar Rolle and Ellsworth Weir with special signage designed to create awareness about the importance of protecting Booby Cay. (Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)

Photo 2: Moriah Harbour Cay National Park was expanded to include



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important marine conservation areas. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*

Photo 3: Minister of the Environment Kenred Dorsett with partners on a special site visit to the Southwest Marine Managed Area. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*

Photo 4: Piping Plover on the Joulter Cays. The new Joulter Cays National Park provides important wintering habitat for endangered shorebirds and particularly the endangered Piping Plover. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*



Photo 5: Minister of the Environment Kenred Dorsett on a special visit to the Joulter Cays organised by National Audubon. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*

Photo 6: Ben's Cave in Lucayan National Park in Grand Bahama. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*

Photo 7: Abaco Blue Holes National Park. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*

Photo 8: Snake Cay, Abaco. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*

Photo 9: East Abaco Creek. *(Photo courtesy of BNT for Barefoot Marketing)*



[Guardians of the Ghats](#)

September 2015



Archana Godbole & Jayant Sarnaik

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A narrow mud path begins under a sprawling banyan tree and takes us up rocky slopes thick with green cover. It is slippery underfoot because it has been raining and we have been told it would not be wise to go more than a short distance. The climb will be manageable, but the way down can be tough and messy, perhaps even dangerous. Being July, we are in the middle of the monsoon in the Western Ghats, one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots. As is to be expected, the fecund forests here are burgeoning with new life. The undergrowth is difficult to negotiate. And there are venomous snakes and other forms of wildlife to think about.

So we don't go too far in, but the periphery in itself is an important landmark. A solitary metal board dwarfed by magnificent greenery announces a unique effort in conservation. From here begin 800 acres of forests under the village of Umre where local dwellers have signed three separate conservation agreements not to cut trees for the next five years in return for financial compensation. Up ahead there are another 538 acres in the village of Kalambaste for which similar agreements been put in place.

The Applied Environment Research Foundation (AERF) is the driving force behind these two conservation agreements. The two parcels of forest are contiguous and connect with the buffer zone of the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve. A swathe of hillside in the Western Ghats has in this way, through agreements, been conserved as a habitat for rare trees, medicinal plants and wildlife.

The Western Ghats are mountains that run parallel to the entire west coast of peninsular India. The sea is not more than 30 km away. Multiple gene strains continue to thrive here though they are also getting decimated and many are either extinct or almost so because of felling and mining.

The villages of Umre and Kalambaste are in the Sanghameshwar block of Ratnagiri district. They fall in what is called the Sahyadri-Konkan Corridor in Maharashtra. It is the North Western Ghats.

Unlike in the rest of the Western Ghats, most of the forests in the north are privately owned. Just six per cent of the forests here are protected areas under the forest department.

The AERF has worked with the private owners of these forests to shape conservation agreements that compensate them adequately. If the agreements had not been signed, it is almost certain that trees would have been felled indiscriminately and sold.

Felling has been quite common in these parts. Local dwellers in need of money are quick to have deals with contractors who put cash down. The wood goes to nearby industries for use as timber and fuel. But now the conservation agreements have provided an alternative. It is possible to preserve the trees for almost the same money that would have come from felling them.

Archana Godbole and Jayant Sarnaik founded AERF in 1994 to save the biodiversity of the North Western Ghats. It has been their mission to find ways of making conservation financially attractive and meaningful to people. Telling people to protect the environment is not enough. It is more impactful to show how natural resources can be used sustainably for economic gain.

Godbole, 52, is a botanist, who began coming here in search of sacred groves when she was working for the Botanical Survey of India and simultaneously doing her Ph.D. That was in the late eighties. Sarnaik, 47, got involved as a public-spirited nature lover but has gone on to acquire a deep understanding of biodiversity. After 20 years of fieldwork and studies they are regarded as experts on the region's natural resources and environmental traditions.

The three days we spend with Godbole and Sarnaik are as packed with learning as they are full of visual delights. Sacred groves, rambling forests, ancient temples, medicinal plants, rare birds and hoary trees — we go on a magical tour of nature's mysteries.

BIG FAMILIES, SMALL HOLDINGS

As we stop our vehicle at a high point on the first day, Godbole and Sarnaik point to vast expanses of greenery on the slopes of the North Western Ghats that they tell us are privately owned. The land belongs to families with very many members. The forests themselves are not more than a few decades old and date back to the time when these families stopped farming on their land.

Since the claimants within a family are many, big holdings are broken up into very small ones in the records, sometimes as little as an acre. This prevents the government from taking them over.

The farming families, being essentially poor, use the trees when they need emergency money, easily turning them into cash by calling in a logging contractor.

Selling the land outright is not an option because ownership within the families is complicated. The locations are also not good for tourism since they are remote and on slopes. Access is difficult.

But these small private forests play an important ecological role. Taken together they represent substantial forest cover. They are home to rare plants, trees and animals.

“It is not that the people here don’t know the inherent value of keeping the forest standing. They have that knowledge. But it is their economic need that drives out that wisdom and makes them hand over their trees to a logging contractor,” says Sarnaik.

“They will tell you how healthy forests are linked to rainfall and groundwater recharge. All this they know, but they also need money in their pockets,” he says.

“The time has gone,” says Godbole, “when you could ask someone not to cut a tree to save the planet. No one buys that argument. For conservation to be successful it has to make economic sense.”

TARGET IS 10,000 HECTARES

The first agreements AERF signed were in October 2008 with five farmers for five years. Ten areas were identified and 10 farmers were approached. Five agreed. Last year, when the agreements matured, all five farmers agreed to renew them.

AERF is particularly fond of these five farmers because they were the original believers in this novel attempt at conservation. But between 2008 and 2013, many more agreements were signed and 2,800 acres have been secured in the Sanghameshwar block of Ratnagiri district.

“We are targeting 10,000 hectares,” says Godbole. “We expect to protect the forests under such agreements till 2050. That is the target we have set.”

Before the agreements were signed, AERF did GIS studies and validated them on the ground to identify good tracts that had not been cut. In this way it zeroed in on the original 10 areas.

“The local people said the logging contractor gave Rs 5,000 for a clump of trees. We said at first that we could give Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 over five years,” says Godbole. “Then we negotiated and checked the quality of the forest and reached a figure of Rs 3,000.”

The terms were that the owners could not sell or lease the forest. They couldn’t undertake subsidy-based plantation because that would mean cutting the forest. They could not build a road or undertake any development.

The first agreements were funded with Rs 5 lakh from the Rufford Small Grants Foundation (RSG). From 2008 to 2013, AERF worked hard to assess biodiversity, mark trees with carbon sequestration and plant more trees.

To expand and do more agreements, AERF launched a web-based initiative called My Forest to appeal to the urban nature lover. It became possible for individuals and companies to sponsor forests in the North Western Ghats. A Business and Biodiversity Programme was also launched.

“There are people who are serious about conservation but don’t know what to do. To them we said you can sponsor a forest,” says Godbole.

Praj Industries and Innoventive Industries based in Pune took 50 acres each. Pukka Herbs, based in the UK, took another 50 acres. Further down the line, money came from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

Unlike the logging contractor, AERF was specific about money and area. Boundaries have been mapped and guarded. “They now say to us, ‘We want to give you forests so that you will keep them safe for us.’ Ultimately the aim is the same — to conserve the forest,” says Sarnaik.

SACRED GROVES AS HERITAGE SITES

At the core of AERF’s conservation effort is the sacred grove. In contrast to private forests, the groves are on land owned by the revenue department but managed by communities. Temples have been built to local deities who came out of folklore. A dream was translated into a belief and from that came an idol and then a temple. Around these temples grew trees and plants. Water sources were protected.

Some of the oldest, most valuable and now endangered trees exist in sacred groves. Linked to the presence of the trees in the sacred groves are bats, giant squirrels, eagles, the Great Pied Hornbill and the Malabar Pied Hornbill.

In the North Western Ghats there are an estimated 2,200 sacred groves. Godbole says she began by working in 10 sacred groves and by 2008 took up another 40. In the past couple of years, 30 more sacred groves have been added. AERF now works for the preservation of 80 or so sacred groves.

“The sacred groves represent a traditional mechanism by which people get connected to nature. They are examples of community management of resources,” says Godbole.

“Sacred groves are the remnants of primary forests in the area. In them you will find the original biodiversity of the area. Sacred groves are the stepping stones to conservation. They are the building blocks of valuable diversity. So if these blocks vanish we don’t see any future for conservation on a larger scale,” explains Sarnaik.

Birds like the Great Pied Hornbill and the Malabar Pied Hornbill nest in old trees found in sacred groves. They look for natural cavities in the Bahera tree (*Terminalia bellerica*). The birds eat fruits and seeds and play an important role in promoting germination.

“Once the seeds pass through the alimentary canal of the birds they germinate. This is why birds like the hornbill are called forest farmers. So there is a complete link — sacred groves, Bahera trees, hornbills and dispersal of forests across the landscape,” says Godbole.

“One Great Pied Hornbill occupies an area of 50 sq km,” says Sarnaik. “They are big birds who eat a lot and so you can imagine the amount of seeds the bird can disperse over the landscape. But for that to happen the hornbill needs its natural habitat. It nests in the natural cavities of Bahera trees, and such cavities form in trees that are 100 years old,” says Sarnaik.

“Since the rate of deforestation is increasing, the hope is that only these trees in sacred groves will survive,” says Sarnaik. “Some of these trees have been around 200 to 300 years. The sacred groves are therefore heritage sites.”

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As with the My Forest initiative, AERF has built an economic aspect into the conservation of sacred groves. At one sacred grove, HCL, the software company, had sponsored the planting of traditional trees that have now grown.

AERF has also been training and involving local people in collecting and processing the fruit of the Bahera tree, which is one of the constituents of triphala, used in Ayurveda as a medicine. The dried and processed Bahera tree fruit is sold to Pukka Herbs in the UK.

AERF has also shown how to use the bark of the Bija tree to make wooden tumblers. The Bija bark is known to control blood sugar. Water stored in the tumbler overnight is supposed to be good for diabetics. The wooden tumblers are smartly packed and for sale. The profits from such initiatives are expected to bring economic benefits to the community and promote the conservation of traditional trees in sacred groves.

Umesh Anand and Photographer Ajit Krishna visited the North Western Ghats to spend time with Archana Godbole and Jayant Sarnaik



Students introduced to biological survey findings

September 24, 2015

ENVIRONMENT students from the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) were introduced to the latest findings of the first biological survey in the highland mountains of Guadalcanal.

More than 60 students doing Certificate in Environment Studies at the School of Natural Resources and Applied Sciences (SNRAS) gathered at the SWIMM compound in Lunga on Friday to hear from scientists about their two weeks' expedition at Chupukama and surrounding areas in the uplands of Mount Popomanaseu.

The students were accompanied by the Dean of the SNRAS Dr Dusti Becker and lecturers Mary Tahu and Albert Kwatela, Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership's Partnership Coordinator.

They all expressed gratitude for an eye-opening field trip to see and hear first hand information from the scientists working on this expedition.

Local scientists MykneeSirikolo, Dr Patrick Pikacha and Edgar Pollard relayed their findings and experiences during the survey with help from their international and regional counterparts.

About 40 national, regional and international biodiversity experts carried out flora and fauna surveys on Chupukama in the hinterland of Central Guadalcanal since September 8.

This was the first ever biological survey of highlands of Mount Popomanaseu and the preliminary findings of the survey were presented at a National Press Event in Honiara yesterday.

These fortunate and enthusiastic SINU students had a life-time experience of seeing specimens and were inspired by what the scientists discovered at this remote location.

Director of Pacific Programs at the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation in the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) based in New York, Dr Christopher Filardi told the students that the survey was to document the flora and fauna of Mount Popomanaseu.

"The purpose of the expedition was to provide data on a poorly known biodiversity, support capacity of landowning

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groups in their quest to conserve the area and to communicate the cultural and biological biodiversity of the mountain.”

Popomanacheu is located within the mountain range locally known as the ‘TetenaHaiaja’ in the Central Highlands of Guadalcanal.

The Haiaja mountain complex comprises the high peaks from Makarakomburu to Popohanatunga and is owned by the traditional highland members of the Uluna-Sutahuri Tribe.

Together, Uluna-Sutahuri Tribe, the Solomon Islands Government, and the University of the South Pacific and their international partners share the goal of fostering Uluna-Sutahuri presence within Bobosogo lands and Tetena-Haiaja, the mountains and ridgelines that include some of the highest points in the south-western Pacific.

With support from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, the planned surveys are intended to improve understanding of the unique biodiversity within the Bobosogo region and advance resource management and conservation of Tetena-Haiaja and adjacent Uluna-Sutahuri customary lands.