

Regional Implementation Team of the Madagascar  
and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot



# NEWSLETTER

Ring-tail Lemur © Jonathan Irish 2023

## A message from the RIT

The CEPF program in the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot is in its second year of implementation.

In 2023, we launched the second calls for large grant projects in the four countries and small grants in Madagascar and Mauritius. The call for large grants led to a longlist of 10 potential large grantees that are currently working on their full proposals and 10 small grants, including 6 for Madagascar and 4 for Mauritius, are in the process of finalizing their full documents as well.



For an overview of the projects that received a CEPF grant so far, please have a look at the [interactive map](#).



## Newsletter Highlights

A message from the RIT

Green Climate Fund integrates fight against climate change into conservation approaches

AFD visits La Vallée de Ferney

New: Call for Large Grants

Grantee stories: Ny Tanintsika, BERI and the Aspinall Foundation

Fundraising & Training Opportunities

CEPF investment RIT MADIO

## Contact Details Regional Implementation Team



Madagascar  
[www.saf-fjkm.org](http://www.saf-fjkm.org)



Comoros  
[www.id-ong.org](http://www.id-ong.org)



Mauritius  
[www.forena.mu](http://www.forena.mu)



Seychelles  
[www.seyccat.org](http://www.seyccat.org)



International  
[www.iucn.nl](http://www.iucn.nl)

Furthermore, in 2023 we identified the capacity building needs of civil society organizations and participated in the interRIT exchange, a global meeting of Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) of CEPF programs, which was a great learning opportunity for our RIT to further increase our effectiveness.



**Read more:**

**[Five ways CEPF and its regional implementation teams are working to enhance grantee support](#)**

For 2024, in collaboration with CEPF, we will focus our activities on capacity building of civil society organizations and monitoring and supporting the 24 funded projects from the first call for proposals in order to maximize their impact on biodiversity and communities in Madagascar, the Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

In this newsletter you can find the latest articles and information about the program in the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot.



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## **Green Climate Fund integrates fight against climate change into conservation approaches**

Madagascar, the Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles are extremely vulnerable to climate change. In response to these challenges, CEPF started a 10-year Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the Indian Ocean program, financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), through l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD) as the Accredited Entity. The goal of this program is to reduce the vulnerability of island populations to climate change by ensuring the essential ecosystem services they need to be resilient.



**[Watch the video to learn more](#)**

The program has three components:

1. Development of strategic plans for ecosystem-based adaptation in the small island biodiversity hotspot that are well aligned with national climate change strategies;
2. Support for ecosystem-based adaptation activities through grants to civil society organizations (CSOs);
3. Ensure long-term sustainability and replication of success through knowledge products and tools for ecosystem-based adaptation.

Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) actions have been identified as a high priority in the climate change strategies of all four hotspot countries. Despite their potential to play an effective role in implementing EbA, civil society organizations are generally underutilized, undervalued and underfunded.

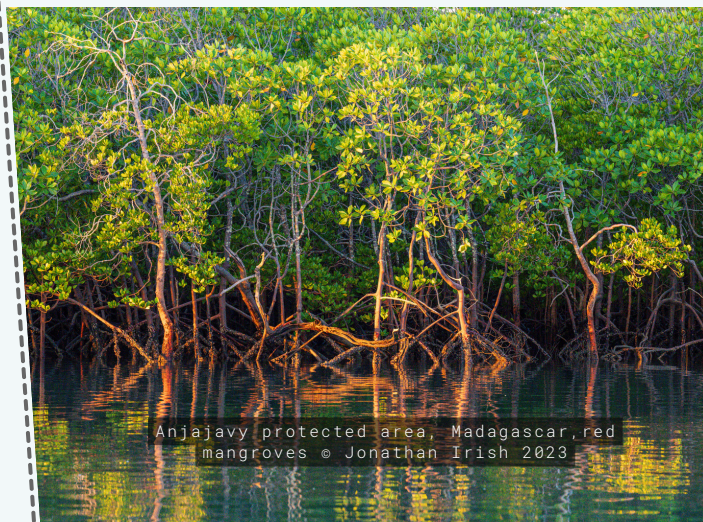
In this context, and based on the analyses presented in the updated Ecosystem Profile, CEPF grant making will support EbA actions to restore and improve the management of 70 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs; 30 in Madagascar, 10 in the Comoros, 10 in Mauritius and 20 in the Seychelles) that make the greatest contribution to the delivery of ecosystem services important to local populations (Strategic Direction 1).

CEPF funds will also mainstream the integration of the EbA approach and ecosystem resilience into public and private sector decision-making (Strategic Direction 2), while building the adaptive capacities of CSOs to analyze climate risks and plan and implement required actions to reduce exposure to these risks (Strategic Direction 3).

Moreover, CEPF funding will be targeted at research that improves knowledge of the role of ecosystem services in helping local communities adapt to climate change, and the effectiveness of EbA actions (Strategic Direction 4).

To ensure a credible, transparent, objective and high quality assessment of the letters of inquiry (LOIs) in line with CEPF's objectives and policies, the CEPF Advisory Committee (CCC) was established in 2023. The fundamental role of the CCC is to guide the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) and the CEPF Secretariat in its decision-making.

The CCC is composed of representatives of CEPF donors in-country, Designated National Authorities (DNAs) as representatives of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and any relevant partners in the hotspot.



Anjajavy protected area, Madagascar, red mangroves © Jonathan Irish 2023



On 14 February, four small grant applicants from Mauritius benefited from a masterclass following their shortlisting in the second call for small grants in November 2023. On 13 and 14 February, six small grant applicants from Madagascar took part in a masterclass. The aim of these sessions is to support shortlisted candidates in preparing their full proposals and all the documents required by the RIT and CEPF for the contracting process.

## AFD visits La Vallée de Ferney

A delegation from l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD), one of the donors of CEPF, visited Mauritius and had the opportunity to discover the La Vallée de Ferney project on December 6, 2023.

Ferney Ltd is the first Mauritian civil society organization to have received a CEPF Large Grant of USD 284,000 as part of the 2022 - 2027 funding cycle for the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Biodiversity Hotspot.

The AFD delegation was made up of Julie Couriaut, Chargée de mission régionale, Laetitia Habchi, Directeur Agence Maurice, Pascale Scapechi, Économiste régionale and Hugo Batardy, Chargé de Mission à Maurice.

The delegation was accompanied by members of FORENA, notably Manoj Vaghjee, President of FORENA and Roshan Baguant, Focal Point for Mauritius.

Guided by Xavier G.H. Koenig, Project Manager, the AFD representatives were able to discover the key sites of the CEPF-funded ecosystem restoration and agro-ecology project.

## Masterclasses for grant applicants

As part of RIT's role to improve the capacity of civil society organizations in project writing, project management, gender mainstreaming and safeguard policies, a series of masterclasses were held for the project leaders of the organizations that were shortlisted following the call for proposals.

On January 12 and 13, 2024, six organizations from Madagascar, two from Mauritius and two international organizations - all shortlisted organizations from the second call for large grants - attended a masterclass by the RIT and CEPF. These sessions were an opportunity to work with each of the project leaders on their own specific situations (taking into account the evaluators' comments, project impact, deliverables, etc.). The workshop was a follow-up from a more theoretical training on 12 December 2023.

## Call for proposals: Large Grants (> 50 000 USD)

The [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund \(CEPF\)](#) and its regional implementation team (RIT) for the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, are accepting letters of inquiry from [civil society organizations](#) for projects that address the eligible activities and geographies of this call. The call opened on 8 March this year and closes on 30 April 2024, at 11.59pm Eastern Time (Washington DC).

 [Read more](#)





A stereo BRUVS showing a snapshot of the marine diversity on rocky reef around a Seychelles inner island © BERI

## GRANTEE STORIES

### Grantee story: Community Empowerment for Climate Resilience in Ankarinoro, Madagascar

In July 2023, Ny Tanintsika started its initiative to empower rural communities in Ankarinoro, Madagascar, supported with a funding of 49,969 USD by CEPF.

With the project Ny Tanintsika assesses the strengths of community-based forest management associations and designs action plans. Simultaneously, they work on the restoration of lands through reforestation and agroforestry, supporting coffee and rice cultivation. With their focus on community engagement, particularly involving women, they are enhancing climate resilience in Madagascar.

In the first six months of the project, Ny Tanintsika managed to strengthen the collaboration with - and commitment of the local authorities, namely the rural Commune, the chief of cantonment, the presidents of the Base Communities (COBAs) and the chiefs fokontany.

Ny Tanintsika also conducted surveys that enabled them to gather data on the capacity of grassroots community organizations and the resilience of biodiversity and communities.

Other achievements of the project so far are:

- The development of four nurseries in three different areas with 24 beds and 33,800 seedlings of native species;
- The organization of a three-day training on composting techniques, of which 210 members of the community from three villages, including 150 men and 60 women, benefited;
- The creation of 1.32 hectares of agroforestry land with the participation of 237 people, of whom 181 were men and 56 were women;
- The establishment of a community savings group in a village with 28 members, of whom 23 are women and 5 are men.

### Grantee story: Improved understanding of coral reefs and marine species increases climate resilience in Seychelles

The University of Seychelles' Blue Economy Research Institute (BERI) has been awarded a 49,234 USD grant by CEPF for a project titled 'Building capacity in Seychelles to advance marine monitoring and ecosystem management to increase climate resilience'. The project will be conducted over a 36-month period from July 2023 to June 2026.

The study area for the project is five marine protected areas (MPAs) within the Seychelles' 'inner' islands around Mahe, Silhouette, Curieuse and Felicite islands.

Researchers will use remote imagery technology to study marine ecosystems both within and adjacent to the MPAs in the study area.

#### Improve understanding of coral reefs and threatened species

By filling important knowledge gaps and building capacity to expand marine monitoring initiatives, this project aims to improve the understanding of the status and distribution of coral reefs and threatened species in selected MPAs, comparing these with data adjacent to each MPA.

The purpose of the project is to:

- Assist in improving MPA management
- Build capacity within Seychelles to undertake remote imagery assessments
- Engage with key stakeholders, civil society organizations and the public to increase knowledge and understanding of the importance of marine ecosystems and the value of MPAs in conserving their species and habitats' resilience in the face of climate change.

BERI will be executing the project with its partners Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority, Ocean Life Science, South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity and the Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment's Biodiversity and Conservation Management Division.

The project started with awareness raising and capacity building. In the first half of 2024, restoration and monitoring activities will start.

## Grantee story: Developing Climate Change Resilience in Rural Community Protected Area Management, Madagascar

In September 2023, the Aspinall Foundation received a 148,994 USD grant from CEPF for its three-year project focusing on helping farming communities in the Forest Corridor of Ankeniheny Zahamena adapt to climate change through a combination of awareness raising, patrolling and training in new skills such as climate-smart agriculture and agroforestry which should prevent further loss of primary forest cover whilst increasing ecosystem services and resilience of the communities.

Improving natural resource management is at the core of the project. In many rural areas of Madagascar, poor farming techniques lead to rapid soil degradation, driving slash-and-burn agriculture that destroys primary forests. A key focus of the project is therefore to provide training to communities on climate-smart agricultural techniques. As a first step, the Aspinall Foundation is teaching communities how to make and use compost to improve soil quality and fertility, replacing the need for burning and expanding agriculture areas. This approach aims to reduce accidental fires and the need to encroach further into forests for farming.

Communities are also taught natural methods to control pests and reduce weed growth in their agricultural areas. The training is supported by the provision of equipment, including man-powered shredders that can be used to shred plant material ready for addition to compost heaps.

The project aims to support around 300 families across five communities in achieving better food production and increased resilience against the negative impacts of climate change from improved agricultural techniques.



## FUNDRAISING & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Online information session on ecosystem-based adaptation. French: 4 April 2024, 11:00 hours (CET). English 4 April 2024, 13:00 hours (CET).



[Register here for the session in English](#)



[Register here for the session in French](#)

- The Global EbA Fund is happy to announce its 7th application cycle with the cut-off date on 21 April 2024. [Read more](#)
- Online workshop toward gender-responsive ecosystem-based adaptation (in French). 25 April, 11:00 hours (CET).



[Register here](#)

### CEPF investment RIT MADIO until March 2024



USD 3.508.278 granted so far



Grants awarded 24 (13 SG and 11 LG)



Projects in 4 countries (Madagascar: 14, Comores: 4, Mauritius: 4, Seychelles 2)

### Projects by CEPF pillar



Biodiversity 16 projects



Civil Society 2 projects



Enabling Conditions 2 projects



Human Well-being 4 projects

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, and the World Bank.

With funding from the Green Climate Fund through AFD as the accredited entity, CEPF will institute and manage a 10-year program of support to civil society organizations to promote ecosystem-based adaptation in the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot. Program activities will take place in Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius and the Seychelles.



IUCN NL, SAF/FJKM (Madagascar), ID-ONG (Comoros), FORENA (Mauritius) and SeyCCAT (Seychelles), as a regional implementation team, are working with CEPF to implement a five-year conservation strategy for the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot and build local civil society capacity.