

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

NEWSLETTER



Antandroy woman carrying basket,
Berenty, Madagascar.
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NEWS FROM CEPF

CEPF Investment Priorities

CEPF has been investing in the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands (MADIO) Biodiversity Hotspot since the year 2000. Between 2022 and 2027 CEPF will be investing US\$14.1 million in the region. Focus will be on projects that build resilience to climate change. The five strategic directions for the new phase of CEPF investment are:

1. Empower communities and civil society to implement actions to improve the resilience of species, ecosystems, and human populations to climate change in priority Key Biodiversity Areas.
2. Support local communities and civil society to strengthen the integration of the ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) approach, ecosystem resilience and biodiversity conservation into political and economic decision-making processes and education.
3. Strengthen the capacities of local communities and civil society at regional and local levels to enhance adaptive capacity and reduce exposure to climate change risks.
4. Support research and ensure the dissemination of results for the promotion and improvement of knowledge on EbA actions and related good practices.
5. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment across the hotspot through a regional implementation team.

Read the updated version of the [Ecosystem Profile](#) to learn more about CEPF's investment in the Hotspot.

Newsletter Highlights

News from CEPF

Grantee stories

Meet the Regional
Implementation Team

Training resources from CEPF

Contact Details Regional Implementation Team



Madagascar
www.saf-fjkm.org



Comoros
www.id-ong.org



Mauritius
www.forena.mu



Seychelles
www.seyccat.org



International
www.iucn.nl



Mangrove, Grande Comore Island, Comoros.
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CEPF synergies with other funders

In line with the CEPF objectives for Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, there are several other programs and funders in the hotspot. The CEPF RIT will proactively look for the potential synergies with these and similar initiatives.

- **Program Varuna- AFD funded-** The Varuna programme aims to contribute to preserving biodiversity in the Southwest Indian Ocean region for the benefit of the inhabitants. <https://www.expertisefrance.fr/en/fiche-projet?id=861344>
- **GEF Small Grants** for Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and the Seychelles. Check with the National Coordinators in these countries for calls for proposals etc. <https://sgp.undp.org/where-we-work-153.html>
- **SeyCCAT Blue Grants Fund for the Seychelles.** The Blue Grants Fund (BGF) of SeyCCAT offers grants to impactful Seychellois-led projects that advance marine conservations, sustainable fisheries, development of new and existing MPAs, and select other blue sectors. Alongside the Blue Investment Fund, managed by the Development Bank of Seychelles, the BGF is a part of the Seychelles' Blue Finance approach. Every year, the BGF opens a 6-week application window when all Seychellois, Seychelles-based NGOs, government entities, parastatal organizations, and businesses registered for more than one year are invited to submit project proposals to the BGF. <https://seyccat.org/blue-grants-fund/>

Key Biodiversity Areas

CEPF's investments will focus on 30 sites (Key Biodiversity Areas) in Madagascar, 10 in the Comoros, 10 in Mauritius and 20 in the Seychelles. These sites—wetlands and waterways, dry forests, and coastal and marine areas—all house ecosystems that have exceptional biodiversity and provide important ecosystem services to the population.

Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Hotspot



Calls for proposals

Between 15 November, 2022 and 2 February, 2023 organizations could apply for large and small grants during the first round of call for proposals. A second call for proposals will open mid 2023. More details will follow soon. Please inform the Regional Implementation Team if you would like to stay informed about future calls for proposals. The RIT can be reached via the following email address: cepf.ritmadio2@saf-fjkm.org.



Love bird (*Agapornis cana*) on *Didierea madagascariensis* in Saint-Augustin, Toliara, south-west Madagascar. © Andry Petignat / Arboretum d'Antsokay



GRANTEE STORIES

CEPF works to empower civil society organizations to do what they do best: Manage the global biodiversity crisis one initiative at a time. Sharing their stories and lessons learned is vital to our collective success.

Back to the Madagascar Wild

CEPF grantee works toward safe return of hundreds of tortoises to their natural habitat

Through two record seizures in 2018, Malagasy authorities rescued thousands of live radiated tortoises (*Astrochelys radiata*) that were likely headed for the illegal wildlife trade—including nearly 10,000 found crammed into a house in Toliara.

More than 9,000 confiscated tortoises were transferred to Tananan'ny sokake, or Le Village des Tortues (the Village of Tortoises), a wildlife rehabilitation facility located north of Toliara in the village of Ifaty, co-managed by French organization Station d'Observation et de Protection des Tortues et de leurs Milieux (SOPTOM) and Malagasy organization Association de Sauvegarde de l'Environnement (ASE).

Many of the tortoises were then moved to other rehabilitation centers, and several hundred had to be euthanized due to poor health, but 2,000 stayed. SOPTOM used a grant from CEPF for a pilot project that is gradually moving 500 of the tortoises back to the wild, in the buffer zone of a protected area within the species' natural range.

Once the tortoises are released from the enclosure and sent out into the wild, SOPTOM will employ community members as guards outside the enclosure while the animals disperse. It will then rely on trained local volunteers to monitor the animals and continue community education efforts.

Pilot Project Restores Forest and Secures Water Supplies in Comoros

Critically Endangered bat species also benefits


The Comoros have suffered from one of the highest deforestation rates in the world since the 1980s due to a combination of extreme poverty, high and growing population pressure, and a dependence on agriculture for livelihoods linked to ill-adapted agricultural techniques.

At present, natural habitat continues to be under threat from agricultural expansion and charcoal production. The situation is particularly critical on the island of Anjouan, where deforestation has led to the loss of around 40 of 50 previously permanent rivers, and heavy soil erosion has reduced soil fertility and caused siltation of marine environments, thereby affecting livelihoods.

To find a better way forward, CEPF grantee Dahari implemented a pilot project that has shown how participatory restoration activities can achieve forest conservation and management with local communities while protecting a significant population of a Critically Endangered endemic species, the Livingstone's fruit bat (*Pteropus livingstonii*).



Rousette de Livingstone
(*Pteropus livingstonii*)
© Ben Charles



Community elders prepare a traditional meal with cricket powder.
© Mickael Andrinirina

The project targeted the protection and restoration of the Moya Forest Key Biodiversity Area, which provides water and other essential ecosystem services to more than 25,000 people. Dahari's work focused on tree planting, using a participatory methodology developed with experts from the World Agroforestry Centre. Over the course of the four-year project, 32,100 trees were planted by farmers who chose the species that they wanted to plant in their fields, thus improving survival rates.

Dahari is also working hard to protect the Livingstone's fruit bat, the flagship species of the Comoros. Efforts have entailed habitat protection and restoration, with emphasis on roosting sites. A notable success is a payment for ecosystem services (PES) scheme implemented around seven roost sites located on private land, protecting around 23% of the global population of the species, estimated to total 1,100 individuals.

Crickets To The Rescue

Insect farming may be part of the solution to malnutrition and destruction of nature

In Madagascar, around 81% of people live in poverty. The island nation experiences the world's fourth-highest rate of chronic malnutrition—almost half of all children under 5 are malnourished.

The desperate scramble to meet the need for food and the resulting destruction of the country's once flourishing ecosystems also threaten the future of food production, fresh water supplies, fertile soil and other resources the country's burgeoning population will require.

To find long-term solutions, Madagascar Biodiversity Center (MBC) opened an edible insect lab and developed the Edible Insect Protein program. A focus of the lab is the use of crickets as food. Crickets multiply quickly, are easy to breed, and are inexpensive to raise, making farming the insects accessible to the poorest communities.

Insects, whole and in powder form, are already a traditional food in Madagascar. MBC believes producing crickets in large quantities would greatly facilitate efforts to improve the lives and health of the Malagasy people.

The new lab, called Valala Farms, will enable the research and development of solutions for small-scale farming that could be used by entities such as health clinics, schools and prisons, as well as large-scale farming for famine relief and food aid.

Seven cricket farms will be built and they will be managed by trained community members—70% of whom are women—creating a foundation for scaling this initiative to 31 communities around the Manombo rainforest after the project period.



Crickets are dried in an electric oven.
©Mickael Andrinirina

MEET THE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

CEPF has enlisted a consortium of nongovernmental organizations to be its regional implementation team (RIT) in the hotspot. Coordinated by IUCN NL and SAF/FJKM as regional team lead, the RIT includes SAF/FJKM for Madagascar, ID-ONG for Comoros, FORENA for Mauritius and SeyCCAT for Seychelles. These organizations are working with CEPF to implement a five-year conservation strategy for the hotspot and build local civil society capacity. The RIT can be reached via the following email address: cepf.ritmadio2@saf-fjkm.org.

Peggy is the Grant Director for the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands hotspot and is responsible for the review of all technical, financial, and administrative elements of large grants proposal and project implementation. Annie is the Grant Manager for the hotspot and is responsible for the review of financial and managerial supporting documents during proposal and project implementation stages.

TRAINING RESOURCES FROM THE CEPF LEARNING HUB

- [Solutions Worth Sharing Methodology](#)
- [Empowering Women in Conservation](#)
- [Establishing and Managing Freshwater Fish Conservation Zones with Communities](#)
- [12 Tips For Getting Your Grant Idea Funded](#)



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.