

Conservation fund for the Mediterranean Basin gives key role to the BirdLife Partnership

Title

A partnership led by Do?a Derne?i/BirdLife in Turkey that also includes the BirdLife International Global Secretariat and Middle East Division and La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (BirdLife in France) will implement the [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund \(CEPF\) investment in the Mediterranean Basin](#). Together these organizations will serve as CEPF?s regional implementation team (RIT).

The words 'vast and complicated' have been used, many times, to describe the process of developing a comprehensive biodiversity conservation strategy for the Mediterranean Basin. This region is the second largest global biodiversity hotspot, encompassing 34 countries stretching west to east from Cape Verde in the Atlantic Ocean to Jordan, and north to south from Italy to Tunisia, for a total of more than 2 million square kilometers. Between 2008 and 2010 CEPF, the MAVA Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation worked with conservation organizations throughout the Mediterranean Basin to develop the ecosystem profile and conservation strategy for this important region.

CEPF?s RITs consist of one or more locally operating NGOs that represent CEPF on the ground in each hotspot, providing local expertise, knowledge and presence. The RITs? responsibility is to build a broad network of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries to achieve the shared goals described in the ecosystem profiles. The RITs also give hands-on assistance to small groups and grassroots organizations, helping them improve proposal writing and project management so they can access additional funding to maintain and scale up projects.

?This comprehensive program, which transcends national boundaries, will give us the opportunity to preserve the unique and vulnerable ecology of the Mediterranean Basin,? said Engin Yilmaz, director general of Do?a Derne?i (BirdLife in Turkey).

Alison Duncan, head of the International Mission at La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO) added, ?This CEPF program for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot offers a fantastic

opportunity to help bridge the gap between the north and the south of this hotspot. LPO is delighted to participate in this consortium to help civil society in North Africa to reinforce their efforts for the conservation of their important biodiversity, and particularly at this challenging time in the region.?

"We are proud to be an implementing partner within this distinguished and creative partnership?, said Ibrahim Khader, head of BirdLife?s Middle East Division. ?The CEPF initiative is a significant investment in the basin, addressing critical and strategic funding to conserve the unique biodiversity, species and sites within this highly diversified area. Developing the civil societies and other community-based organisations? capacities in the Eastern Mediterranean is key to achieving and sustaining meaningful conservation outputs.?

Fifteen countries in the region are potential targets for CEPF investment. CEPF grants will integrate with other conservation activities in the hotspot so that, jointly, these form a Mediterranean-wide conservation effort that addresses integrated river basin and coastal zone management and seeks to improve the management of 44 sites that the conservation strategy identifies as priorities for action. A Regional Advisory Group will assist the RIT in the review and selection of grants to be awarded.

The Advisory Group will be made up of volunteers representing relevant institutions to provide technical input on the relative merits of the project applications received, and ensure that the funding requests are cost effective and integrate with other ongoing activities. With the selection of the RIT, Do?a Derne?i and CEPF would like to issue an expanded request for proposals for those countries from which we have received Global Environment Facility (GEF) focal point endorsements to date. These include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Jordan, Syria and Tunisia.

Countries where the GEF focal point has not endorsed CEPF?s ecosystem profile and strategy are ineligible to receive funds. These countries are: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Turkey. As soon as the focal point endorsement is received these countries will be eligible to receive funds.

CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.
