



## CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

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**Project Title:** Instituting a Standardised Sustainable Biodiversity Monitoring System in the Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests of Kenya and Tanzania.

**Duration:** 2005-2008

**Funded by:** The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

### Overall Goal

To improve the conservation status of biodiversity in the Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests of Kenya and Tanzania region (EACF) through effective monitoring through implementation of a comprehensive sustainable monitoring system involving all key stakeholders and the making information widely available and accessible.

### Objectives

- Establish a baseline of monitoring knowledge, data and practitioners in the EACF and the current main gaps and needs.
- Facilitate all key stakeholders to develop, agree, standardise and implement protocols for biodiversity monitoring across the EACF.
- Assess and document the trends in conservation status and threats to selected species, sites and habitats in the EACF after four years of CEPF investment.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive database where information on the Conservation Outcomes of the EACF hotspot is stored and from where such information is readily available and regularly distributed.

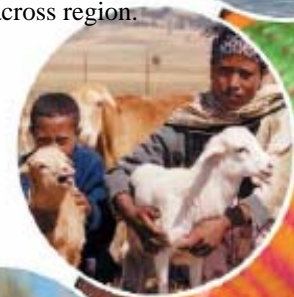
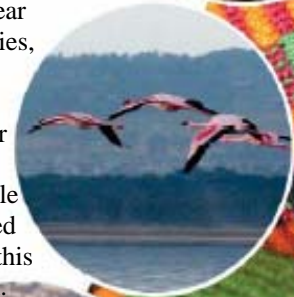
### Rationale

The Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests of Tanzania and Kenya region, running along the coasts of these two East African countries including Zanzibar, is home to over 333 globally threatened species found in about 160 sites. Previously classified as a biodiversity hotspot itself, the region now lies within two hotspots—the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot and the Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa Hotspot (since 2005). The habitats are notably fragmented, making threatened species within key sites highly vulnerable to extinction and further habitat loss. Agricultural encroachment, timber extraction, and charcoal production are the greatest threats to habitat, although weak management capacity within government and communities is a serious issue. In 2004 CEPF made a five-year investment of USD 7 million in the region focused on conserving the region's 333 globally threatened species, which are primarily found in 160 sites.

As might be expected, this region has attracted hundreds of researchers and conservationists eager to gather further knowledge and track biodiversity changes in the region. However, in the past information has not been properly coordinated across the region, thus making information difficult to interpret at a regional scale communication, networking and information sharing across stakeholders has been limited; and also the need has been seen for assessing the impacts of the CEPF investment in the region. To address these concerns, this project was initiated to coordinate a standardised sustainable biodiversity monitoring system across region.

### Main Activities

- Review of existing monitoring frameworks and protocols being applied across the EACF.
- Facilitation of development and agreement by all key stakeholders, of standardised biodiversity monitoring protocols (mainly indicators and methods) in the EACF.
- Publishing and popularising the agreed standardised protocols covering all key species and sites so that monitoring efforts across the EACF use the standard system.
- Implementing field monitoring at set of model sites to demonstrate use of agreed biodiversity monitoring protocols.
- Managing and maintaining the EACF Conservation Outcomes database and making information widely available to key institutions within the region.



## **Progress**

- A comprehensive review of approaches and protocols used for biodiversity monitoring in the EACF was done in 2005. It documented a baseline of ongoing monitoring activities and key gaps.
- Through consultations held within a stakeholder workshop held in June 2005 and thereafter, common biodiversity monitoring indicators methodologies were agreed. These have been published and disseminated in a brochure that is also available online.
- Four model sites are being monitored to demonstrate biodiversity monitoring using the agreed framework have been set-up and are being monitored systematically by Nature Kenya and WCST: Uluguru North, Lindi Forest, Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, and Dakatcha woodlands.
- Through a regular e-bulletin, stakeholders are being regularly updated on ongoing monitoring initiatives within EACF and the first (2006) the biodiversity status and trends report has been produced.
- The Conservation Outcomes database for the EACF has continued to be populated regularly and updates disseminated through the e-bulletin.

## **Lessons Learned**

- There exists vast of information on biodiversity conservation but putting in place a system to coordinate and bring all this information and stakeholders together is the most important thing within the region.
- For quite a number of the stakeholders one-one meetings have been seen as one of the most efficient way of engaging them to contribute to this initiative.

**Challenges:** Although an initial intention, uploading of the conservation outcomes database on the web has been shelved due to the risks of likely use by unscrupulous people, e.g. those wanting to trade on threatened or endemic species. This has hindered wide dissemination of the database.

**Next steps:** Continued gathering of monitoring information from stakeholders and collating it into annual biodiversity status and trends reports that track changes in biodiversity of the EACF.

**Last updated:** 20 August 2007.

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