Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Morocco

Factsheet about future investment in biodiversity conservation projects in Morocco by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)

Northern Bald Ibis © Louis Marie Preau
What is CEPF?

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) provides grants to non-governmental and private sector organizations to help protect biodiversity hotspots. Since its establishment in 2000, CEPF has awarded more than 2,120 grants in 92 countries and territories. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

What is the Mediterranean Biodiversity Hotspot?

Stretching from Cabo Verde to eastern Turkey, the Mediterranean Basin is identified as one of the world’s 35 biodiversity hotspots, earth’s most biologically rich, yet threatened, areas.

CEPF has been active in the hotspot since 2012, investing US$ 11.2 million in the first 5 years, and began a new 5-year investment phase in 2017, with US$ 10 million to invest until September 2022.

CEPF’s initial investment phase demonstrated that through funding, along with mentoring, partnerships and innovative communication strategies, civil society groups play an important role in conservation efforts.

What is CEPF’s investment strategy?

Before providing funding to a hotspot, CEPF develops an “Ecosystem Profile” that informs its investment strategy. In the Mediterranean, more than 500 civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the region were consulted over a period of 6 months for this in-depth analysis, helping to develop a shared strategy from the outset that has a bigger impact for nature.

When developing an Ecosystem Profile for a biodiversity hotspot, CEPF decides on a few priorities, which are known as “Strategic Directions”. These are important to grant applicants because each project must address a Strategic Direction and one or more of its investment priorities.

For the Mediterranean, these are the current Strategic Directions:

1. Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the preservation of biodiversity in coastal areas.
2. Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity.
3. Promote the maintenance of traditional land use practices necessary for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of high cultural and biodiversity value.
4. Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the conservation of plants that are Critically Endangered or have highly restricted ranges.
5. Strengthen the regional conservation community through the sharing of best practices and knowledge among grantees across the hotspot.

Who is eligible for a grant?

All NGOs, community groups, private enterprises and other civil society organizations may apply for funding. Our grant recipients range from small farming cooperatives and community associations to international organizations.

What do they all have in common? They are dedicated to protecting biodiversity. For more details, please visit our page:

https://www.cepf.net/grants/eligibility

How do I apply?

For information on how to apply, please visit:

https://www.cepf.net/grants

Calls for Proposals are announced on the CEPF website at: https://www.cepf.net/grants/open-calls-for-proposals
Why is CEPF investing in Morocco?

To protect priority Key Biodiversity Areas and species

Morocco’s diverse habitats range from mountainous regions (at 4167 metres, Mount Toubkal is the highest point in North Africa) to grassland, rivers and wetlands.

The Moroccan fauna is rich and varied with more than 25,000 species, 11% of which are endemic to Morocco alone. For example, Souss-Massa National Park is the final wild stronghold of Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* (Endangered). North Africa possesses nearly 1700 species and subspecies of endemic plants, more than half of which are in Morocco. This rich endemism is thanks to the contrasting mosaic of different habitats that make up the area.

The major challenge in Morocco is to improve public knowledge of its extraordinary wildlife. Another urgent concern is the loss and fragmentation of habitats through human development. Tourism, deforestation, hunting, fishing, soil erosion, the energy sector and mining are the top threats to this country’s nature. Water pollution is also a growing threat to Morocco’s habitats and people. As the natural flow of rivers and wetlands are disrupted by hydroelectric dams and human expansion, they are losing both their resident species, and the crucial ecosystem services they provide.

CEPF investment in the country has played a key part in combating these challenges. Important habitats across the country have benefited from our grantee projects, ranging from Marchica in the north, through National parks in the high Atlas to Souss-Massa National park in the south.

Eligibility of projects in Morocco:

CEPF investment in Morocco will focus on the following investment priorities:

**Strategic Direction 1: Coasts:** Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the preservation of biodiversity in coastal areas with the following investment priorities:

1.1: Engage local stakeholders in conservation actions that address threats to key elements of biodiversity in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.

1.2: Engage private sector stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices that deliver positive impacts for conservation in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.

1.3: Support civil society to engage with local or national governments to mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated coastal zone management, land-use and development planning processes.

**Strategic Direction 2: Freshwater biodiversity:** Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity by supporting the following investment priorities:

2.1: Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and its importance in maintenance of freshwater ecosystem services.

2.2: Take action to reduce threats and improve management of selected sites in priority freshwater catchments with the participation of local stakeholders.

2.3: Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority CMZs.

**Strategic Direction 3: traditional land use** Promote the maintenance of traditional land use practices necessary for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of high cultural and biodiversity value.

3.1: Support local communities to increase the benefit they receive from maintaining and enhancing traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use and agricultural practices.

3.2: Promote awareness of the value of traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices among local communities and government decision makers, to secure their recognition and support.

3.3: Encourage business actors in the trade chain to support and promote traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.

**Strategic Direction 4: Plants:** Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the conservation of plants that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges through supporting the following investment priorities:

4.1: Increase knowledge and skills to support assessment and planning for the conservation of plants, and foster the emergence of a new generation of young professionals in plant conservation.

4.2: Support integration of plant conservation into the management of protected areas.

4.3: Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with landowners and managers.

Please visit www.cepf.net and www.birdlife.org/cepf-med for more information about our programs.
How can I get involved?

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For questions specific to Morocco grants, contact:
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List of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in Morocco

Corridors prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>corridor</th>
<th>country</th>
<th>Corridor area (km²)</th>
<th>No. of KBAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Atlas Mountains</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>106,691</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Atlas Mountains

Corridors prioritized for CEPF support under Strategic Direction 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>country</th>
<th>Catchment Management Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Abid river</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Ahremer river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Middle Oum Er Rbia - Beni Mellal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Oued BOURCEGREG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Sehb El Majnouna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Tifnout basin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Upper Oum Er Rbia</td>
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</tbody>
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