

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

Sixteenth Meeting of the Donor Council
Conservation International
2011 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA
15 January 2010
8 a.m. - 11 a.m. EST

Ecosystem Profile for the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

Recommended Action Item:

The Donor Council is asked to **review** and **approve** the ecosystem profile for the Caribbean Islands biodiversity hotspot. Similarly, the Donor Council is asked to provide for the increase to the CEPF spending authority from \$141.4 million to \$147.9 million for implementation of this profile.

Background:

The Donor Council approved five new biodiversity hotspots as priorities for CEPF investment in July 2007 based on the paper “Setting Priorities for Future Investment”¹ as follows:

- Mediterranean Basin;
- Caribbean Islands;
- East Melanesian Islands;
- Eastern Afrotropical (incorporating the Horn of Africa as appropriate); and
- Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany.

Two other new priorities for investment are expected to be selected at a later date from among the following hotspots: Madrean Pine-Oak Woodlands; Cerrado; Wallacea; Chilean Winter Rainfall-Valdivian Forests; and Mountains of Central Asia.

As part of this decision, the Donor Council agreed that the Caribbean Islands Hotspot would be among the first to undergo ecosystem profiling. The Council approved the necessary funds to begin profiling this region for fiscal year 2009 (July 2008-June 2009) as part of approving the Spending Plan for that same year. Profiling for this region formally began in February 2009.

The Caribbean Islands Hotspot is a complex and diverse region of thousands of islands, mainly in three large groups between North and South America: the Bahamas, the Lesser Antilles and the Greater Antilles. Politically, it comprises 12 independent nations (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines), as well as British, Dutch, French and U.S. overseas territories or jurisdictions.

The Ecosystem Profile for the Caribbean Islands Hotspot was developed through a process of stakeholder consultation and expert research studies coordinated by BirdLife International (Caribbean Program) in collaboration with Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust / Bath University, and the New York Botanical Garden, with technical support from Conservation International’s Center for Applied Biodiversity Science.

¹ Setting Priorities for Future Investment paper,
www.cepf.net/Documents/11_10.settingprioritiesforfutureinvestment.pdf (PDF - 246 KB)

The profiling process for this region incorporated regional stakeholder input through national workshops and a regional meeting. For example, workshops were held in Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica during June 2009, coordinated by Grupo Jaragua, Société Audubon Haiti and the BirdLife Caribbean Program. These workshops were attended by almost 100 individuals representing 58 institutions that assisted in analyzing current threats to biodiversity, inventorying conservation and development investment taking place within the region, and defining potential priorities for CEPF investment. A hotspot-wide workshop held in July 2009 on Antigua was attended by more than 70 experts and contributors who helped discuss a draft investment strategy.

In addition, profile coordinators in Bahamas (Bahamas National Trust), Dominican Republic (Grupo Jaragua), Haiti (Société Audubon Haiti), Jamaica (BirdLife), Lesser Antilles (BirdLife on Barbados) and Puerto Rico (Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña) facilitated gathering of information and review within their own countries. As a result, at least 200 individuals representing more than 160 governmental and nongovernmental institutions have contributed to the development of this ecosystem profile.

A working draft of the profile was shared with the CEPF Working Group and stakeholders in July 2009 as part of the preparations for the regional stakeholders meeting. A refined draft of the profile was discussed at a meeting of the Working Group in October 2009. In addition, a further refined draft of the investment strategy was distributed to the Working Group in November 2009 for final review. All comments have been incorporated into this final draft submitted for Donor Council review and approval.

The ecosystem profile presents an overview of the hotspot in terms of its biological importance, climate change impacts, major threats to and root causes of biodiversity loss, socioeconomic context and current conservation investments. It provides a suite of measurable conservation outcomes, identifies funding gaps and opportunities for investment, and thus identifies the niche where CEPF investment can provide the greatest incremental value. It also contains a five-year, \$6.5 million investment strategy for CEPF in the region.

While information from all countries in the hotspot has been compiled, the CEPF investment strategy focuses on determining where CEPF can add the greatest value in the following countries currently eligible to receive CEPF funds as both signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity and World Bank client countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In addition, the Bahamas and Barbados are included as priorities for CEPF investment because of their eligibility to receive GEF funds specifically.

CEPF's niche in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot will be to support civil society groups so that they can serve as effective advocates, facilitators and leaders for conservation and sustainable development of their islands. Activities to be supported will focus on 45 key biodiversity areas, many of which are embraced by six biodiversity conservation corridors. The corridors encompass groupings of these key biodiversity areas of high priority due to their importance for maintaining ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services values, and the health and richness of the hotspot's biological diversity.