The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) returns to the Caribbean

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Following a successful investment in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot that ended in 2016, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) has returned to the Caribbean for a second five-year investment between August 2021 and July 2026. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) will once again play the regional implementation team (RIT) role and help implement CEPF’s strategy by supporting CEPF grantees on the ground.

“We are pleased that CEPF has decided to return to the Caribbean,” said CANARI Executive Director Nicole Leotaud. “The CEPF phase two investment of US$13.9 million is a significant increase over the previous investment of US$6.9 million and is an indicator of the importance that CEPF places on the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot,” she continued. The CEPF aims to strengthen the protection and management of globally important biodiversity within 32 priority Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and seven conservation corridors in Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The new CEPF Caribbean programme is timely both for CANARI and the region. The start of the second investment coincides with the launch of CANARI’s ten-year strategic plan 2021 - 2030. CEPF’s intentional efforts to improve the enabling conditions for biodiversity conservation and the focus on building the capacity of Caribbean civil society align well with CANARI’s strategic objectives to develop more effective arrangements and actors for participatory natural resource governance. “The CEPF programme is an opportunity for our CSO partners to innovate and scale their efforts and as the RIT CANARI is well placed to provide support and play a facilitating role,” Leotaud observed.
Caribbean CSOs welcome the return of the CEPF to the region. “The COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters, like the recent earthquake in Haiti, put immediate needs of our people in sharp relief,” commented Fondation Pour La Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM) Executive Director, Jean Wiener. “But we cannot forget about the future of our countries and ecosystems in the face of the threats of biodiversity collapse and climate change,” he added. “This significant investment by the CEPF is a timely opportunity for Caribbean CSOs that, like the rest of society, face unprecedented pressures.”

“The focus on species conservation is a welcome addition to the CEPF’s Caribbean investment,” said Ingrid Parchment, who took part in the consultations to develop the new CEPF Caribbean Strategy. Parchment manages the Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation, which operates in Jamaica’s largest protected area, the Portland Bight Protected Area and was a CEPF grantee during the first investment. “Climate change is having an impact on our species, but we don’t have a complete understanding of what is happening and therefore are unable to put adequate responses in place,” she noted.

CEPF looks forward to building on the results of the first investment. “We had a robust initial investment in the Caribbean Islands,” said CEPF Grant Director Michele Zador. “CEPF helped to spotlight the role and the importance of civil society organisations and their contributions, and we are eager to partner with Caribbean CSOs once again to build on the foundational accomplishments of phase one. We are ready to work.”

For more information about the CEPF Caribbean Islands investment, go to https://bit.ly/3BnNfFx