

Evaluation highlights

Biodiversity Conservation Trust Funds

Scope Conservation Trust Funds (BaCoMaB, BIOFUND, BioGuiné, FAPBM, FTNS, FPRCI, Mar Fund, The MedFund)

Areas of operation Africa, Central America, Mediterranean

Amount €70 M committed to 8 CTFs

Period evaluated 2005-2019

Donors Agence Française de Développement (AFD), French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM)

With pressure constantly increasing on natural environments, mobilizing financing for biodiversity conservation is crucial. To this end, conservation trust funds (CTFs) are valuable tools for generating resources for protected areas. AFD has supported eight CTFs since 2005, amounting to a total of €70 million to date. It conducted an evaluation to measure the relevance of those CTFs and to improve their effectiveness.

Conservation Trust Funds (CTFs)

Protected areas are a key conservation instrument for countering erosion of biodiversity. However, they are not one of the budget priorities of national governments. To respond to this problem and make up for the lack of financing needed to deal with the current challenges, CTFs were developed in the early 2000s. CTFs are independent financial institutions that mobilize resources from international donors, governments, and private-sector players and invest those resources in financial markets. In this way, they generate a financial return paid in the form of grants to protected areas or NGOs. The aim is to provide regular, sustainable and crisis-proof funding dedicated to conservation actions.

There are currently around 100 CTFs worldwide. AFD and the FFEM sought to evaluate their support to eight funds over the 2005–2019 period in Africa, Central America, and the Mediterranean. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance of the funds as an instrument to diversify sources of funding and to identify the conditions needed to enable a change of scale.

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Through their grants, AFD and FFEM provide support both to national CTFs, such as the Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity of Madagascar (FABPM), and to regional funds, such as The MedFund, which works to ensure sustainable financing of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean. The MedFund contributes to the preservation of eight MPAs covering 3,000 km² in Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, and Albania. Its goal is to provide support for more than 40 by 2030. AFD also encourages The MedFund to promote funding that fosters the adaptation of ecosystems and communities to the effects of climate change.



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Main findings

- **96 protected areas were supported by the 8 funds evaluated, thanks to distribution of €58 million in grants.** This amount represents an average 30% of the recurring costs of protected areas. Although the funding deployed through CTFs is constantly increasing, it remains insufficient to cover the needs for current and future protected areas.
- **CTFs can be considered relevant tools for mobilizing complementary and sustainable resources for the conservation of terrestrial, marine, and coastal biodiversity.** They have made it possible to generate stable subsidies, even in times of crisis when many funds were not available.
- **The CTFs complied with Conservation Finance Alliance standards by and large,** in terms of governance and investment policies. Progress has been made, but the evaluation did identify room for improvement on financial ethics topics.
- **Financial performance targets were achieved, with an average annual return of 4%.** The CTFs have generated a steady flow of funding for conservation.
- **Monitoring of impact on the ground is still insufficient.** Efforts are being made to better integrate environmental and social risks as well as gender issues into CTF-supported activities. However, better supporting protected areas in measuring the impacts of these activities remains a critical challenge.

Why was it necessary to evaluate conservation trust funds?



Claire Cogoluenhes,
Evaluation Officer
at AFD

Because financing is a core issue of the new global framework for the protection of biodiversity, it's important to search for new mechanisms and new sources

of financing. For reaching just the goal of 30% protection of terrestrial and marine habitats by

2030, the needs are estimated at between \$149 billion and \$192 billion per year. Evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of CTFs thus became vital for diversifying sources of financing and effecting a change in scale. With 15 years having passed since AFD's initial support to the CTFs, we possessed the hindsight needed to draw valuable lessons from this experience.

What was special about this evaluation?



Sylvène Laborie-Roussel,
Evaluation Officer
at AFD

This was the first time we conducted a cross-cutting evaluation on eight CTFs. It will lead to broader input for discussions on the sustainability of funding for protected areas. The evaluation

stirred up a great deal of interest when it was presented at the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

World Conservation Congress, a much-awaited biodiversity event held in September 2021. The cross-cutting nature of the study enabled us to make useful recommendations to donors and the CTFs, which have already begun to apply them.

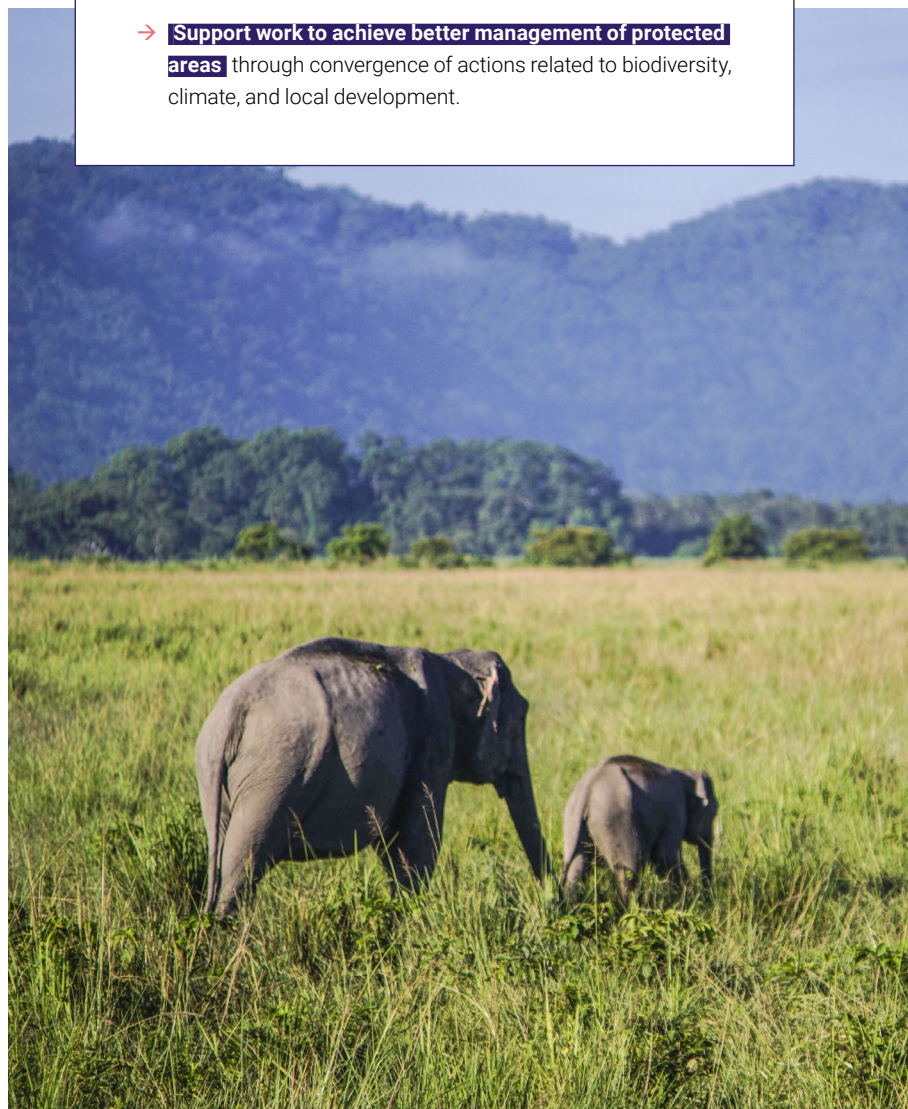
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Evaluation recommendations

- **Diversify the sources of funding for biodiversity conservation.** To this end, ambitious and innovative strategies should be deployed to mobilize resources that can meet the huge funding needs for biodiversity.
- **Encourage the use of so-called socially responsible investments** that meet environmental, social, and governance criteria through stronger financial ethics.
- **Consolidate the governance and operationalization of CTFs** to enhance their transparency and effectiveness over the long term.
- **Improve measurement of the impact of protected areas supported by CTFs**, by introducing simplified and systematic tools to monitor results.
- **Support work to achieve better management of protected areas** through convergence of actions related to biodiversity, climate, and local development.



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CONTACT
Claire Cogoluenhes, cogoluenhes@afd.fr