



2024-2025 ACTIVITY REPORT
OUTLOOK

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EDITORIAL

30 years of innovations and still a pioneer

—

Climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, land and ocean degradation... Over the past 30 years, the factors underlying the environmental crisis and their impacts have become more acute. In response, the FFEM has adopted an increasingly integrated approach, supporting projects at the intersection of development and environmental protection that simultaneously address several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The convergence of issues is central to this approach.



Because the poorest populations are the first victims of environmental crises, the FFEM works to ensure that the benefits of these projects are shared equitably. It therefore mobilises a wide network of partners on the ground – public and private, from civil society, the research community and local authorities.

A source of inspiration

The FFEM's mission is to identify relevant innovations for tackling these challenges, support their testing in the field and encourage their wider dissemination. The monitoring, evaluation and capitalisation arising from projects generate knowledge useful to decision-makers and foster scaling-up. This approach is grounded in scientific data and also aims to strengthen local research capacities.

Strengthening France's voice

By providing robust arguments in favour of innovative technologies, practices and governance models, our approach informs and strengthens France's positions in international environmental negotiations. Whether on carbon finance, the role of the ocean in climate regulation or alternatives to plastics, recommendations from the field are shared at international level, as was the case at the Third United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice in June 2025.

By placing sustainability, science and equity at the heart of its priorities, the FFEM acts as a catalyst for innovation for people and the planet, while helping to shape the future of international cooperation. The FFEM is proud to have celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2025, an occasion that highlighted its unique contribution and initiated reflection on strategic priorities for 2027-2030.

The FFEM: a catalyst for the solutions of tomorrow

For 30 years, the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) has been funding projects in the Global South that combine protection of the planet with local development. Its innovation-centred approach is unique.

In 1992, the Rio Earth Summit enshrined the principle of sustainable development, integrating ecological issues with socio-economic concerns. Three major conventions were born: on biodiversity, climate and desertification. To put these ambitions into practice, France created the French Facility for Global Environment in 1994. Its mission: to test innovative solutions – technical, social, organisational or financial – that reconcile protection of the global environment with local development.

Innovation serving transitions

Today, the FFEM continues to act as an “ideas laboratory”, focusing on five priorities: biodiversity, aquatic ecosystems, agricultural and forest territories, low-carbon urban transition, circular economy and combating pollution. Whether they involve governing protected areas, nature-based solutions or recycling, projects are rooted in science and strong local ownership. The FFEM relies on a network of public, private and civil society partners. Local communities bring their knowledge of the field and fully participate in driving change.

The importance of scaling up

The FFEM objective: that the most promising innovations spread. This means preparing scaling-up from the outset and supporting project initiators in identifying objectives, targets and levers for action. For example, by supporting fair-trade actors, producers and suppliers, the FFEM has promoted the adoption of stricter environmental criteria, while encouraging sustainable farming practices, conservation of ecological corridors and gender equality. Innovation at the FFEM is also a lever for societal change.



Evaluate-capitalise: a lever for impact and scaling up

The FFEM devotes part of its budget to evaluating the projects it supports, but also to capitalising on the solutions. **Maëlis Borghese, Head of Evaluation-Capitalisation, supervision of the active portfolio, explains what this means.**



What are the main challenges encountered in evaluation?

Maëlis Borghese: The FFEM supports the testing of innovative solutions with a view to not only verify their effectiveness, but also to inspire other stakeholders. This requires drawing the maximum lessons from projects, from good practices to success factors, obstacles and difficulties...

Yet project initiators do not always have the time, resources or perspective to conduct this analysis. To make evaluation useful, we commission independent expert consultancies. We ask them to go into the field and meet project stakeholders and beneficiaries in order to produce their reports. Sometimes, when results are inconclusive, project initiators may also be reluctant to share their experience. Nevertheless, we insist on the “right to try”. We fund experiments, and we accept the risk that

For more sustainable management of production forests in Central Africa



In 2023, the FFEM published a capitalisation on the projects it had supported for more than 10 years in terms

of forest management in Central Africa. It made six major recommendations aimed at improving the sustainability of management plans for these ecosystems, which it shared at the 2023 One Forest Summit in order to inform discussions.

“Inconclusive trials are not failures. They provide useful lessons for moving forward.”

MAËLIS BORGHESE, Head of Evaluation-Capitalisation, supervision of the active portfolio

some will not work or not right away. Moreover, we do not treat any as failures. These projects generate valuable lessons that help us to capitalise on all the other projects with a similar theme (see boxes).

Are these studies also used to adjust FFEM guidelines?

M.B.: Yes. For example, in the 2023-2026 strategy we are supporting more projects aimed at producing scientific data on biodiversity in the high seas because earlier initiatives showed that this could advance political decision-making. By demonstrating the essential role of planktonic ecosystems, the project led by the Tara Ocean Foundation between 2017 and 2021, contributed to the international community by recognising the need to preserve these ecosystems and to include them in the High Seas Biodiversity Conservation Treaty (known as "BBNJ"¹), signed in 2023 and now in the process of ratification.

What proportion of projects is scaled up?

M.B.: This is difficult to measure systematically. Sometimes more than 10 years can pass between the end of a local pilot project and it being taken up more widely in the country, or even elsewhere! But the FFEM rarely has the resources to monitor a project's evolution after its direct involvement has ended. We mostly receive news informally. Ifrane National Park in Morocco is a good example. In the 2000s, we supported its creation. The Moroccan institution in charge of protected areas tested several approaches to shared management with local communities. We then had no further news until, 20 years later, the project manager at the time – now Head of the National Parks and Protected Areas Department of Morocco – contacted AFD and FFEM again to finance the roll-out of some of these solutions across all the country's forests.

Since we don't have the resources to track the outcome of all our actions, we encourage project initiators to put in place the conditions for scaling up from the outset. Key factors include the involvement of local authorities and financial actors, impact measurement, communication and visibility of results.

1- Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction.

Focus on carbon finance



For 15 years, the FFEM has been funding forest preservation and mangrove restoration projects based on the generation of carbon credits. Some have produced very positive results, while others have received more mixed feedback. To better understand the conditions for success of these types of carbon finance mechanisms, in 2024 the FFEM decided to conduct a critical review of all these projects. This resulted in eight concrete recommendations for project initiators, donors and decision-makers who wish to embark on carbon finance projects today. It has also contributed to informing France's position on the subject in international environmental negotiations.

26

evaluations were carried out in **2023** and **2024**, i.e. around a dozen per year.

70%

of projects evaluated during this period **met the conditions for scaling up, with the innovation tested deemed relevant for 95%**.

75%

of completed projects evaluated **over 20 years**.

Integrating nature into cities in Latin America



In 2023, the FFEM capitalised on two projects: the Green Belt of Guatemala City and the Urban Reserve of west Santa Fe in Argentina. This generated six recommendations for planning cities which, thanks to an increased presence of nature, improve inhabitants' well-being, protect biodiversity and increase resilience to climate change.

30 years of sustainable solutions

NEARLY
414
PROJECTS SUPPORTED
SINCE 1994

€528m
COMMITTED OUT
OF €6BN TOTAL
PROJECT BUDGETS

130
INTERVENTION
COUNTRIES

300
PROJECT
INITIATORS

1992

Rio Earth Summit.

Signature of the three conventions on climate, biodiversity and desertification. Creation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).



1994

Creation of the
**French Facility
for Global
Environment
(FFEM).**



1997-1999

The FFEM engages in
promoting energy efficiency
in buildings and renewable
energies.





Look back at our key moments here.

2015

Adoption of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The FFEM continues its integrated approach to combining environmental protection and development.

Paris Climate Agreement.

2009

The FFEM adds high seas protection to its strategy with the launch of negotiations on the Treaty of the High Seas.

2013-2018

Calls for projects under the **Sector Innovation Facility for Climate** (FISP-Climate).

2019

The FFEM has made **the circular economy and the fight against pollution** a priority focus of its strategy.

2020

First 'zero-deforestation' cocoa production project supported by the FFEM.

2021-2024

Series of capitalisations on marine protected areas, nature in cities, sustainable forest management and carbon finance.

2022

Kunming-Montreal Agreement on the Global Biodiversity Framework.

2005

Launch of the **1st Small-Scale Initiatives Programme (PPI)**, mobilising civil society for biodiversity conservation. **Launch of the first Clean Development Mechanism** projects and **REDD+** project.

Entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

2007

Scaling up of projects **to combat climate change**, particularly the first adaptation projects.

2023

As negotiations towards a plastics treaty begin, the FFEM funds projects for reduction at source and alternatives to plastics.

2024

FFEM launches a One Health call for projects.

Adoption of the Treaty of the High Seas (BBNJ)¹.

2025

United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC). Entry into force of **the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)**.

¹. Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction.

The FFEM in figures

At the mid-point of its 2023-2026 strategy, the FFEM shows a positive first assessment, with the first half of the cycle already rich in achievements.

**BETWEEN 2023
AND 2024**

€37.7m

committed

21

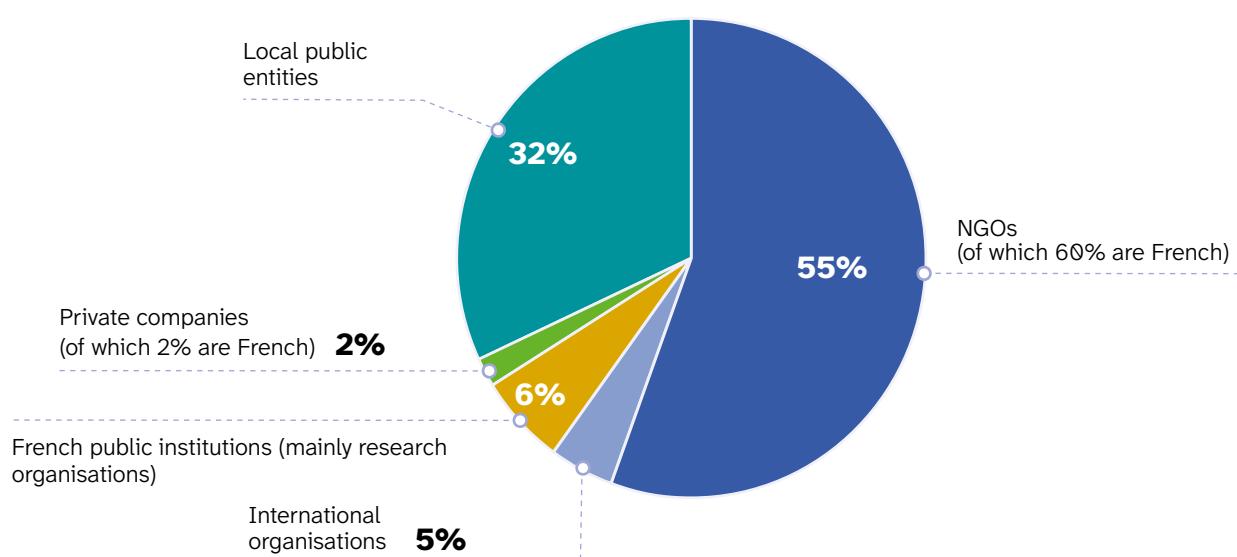
projects financed

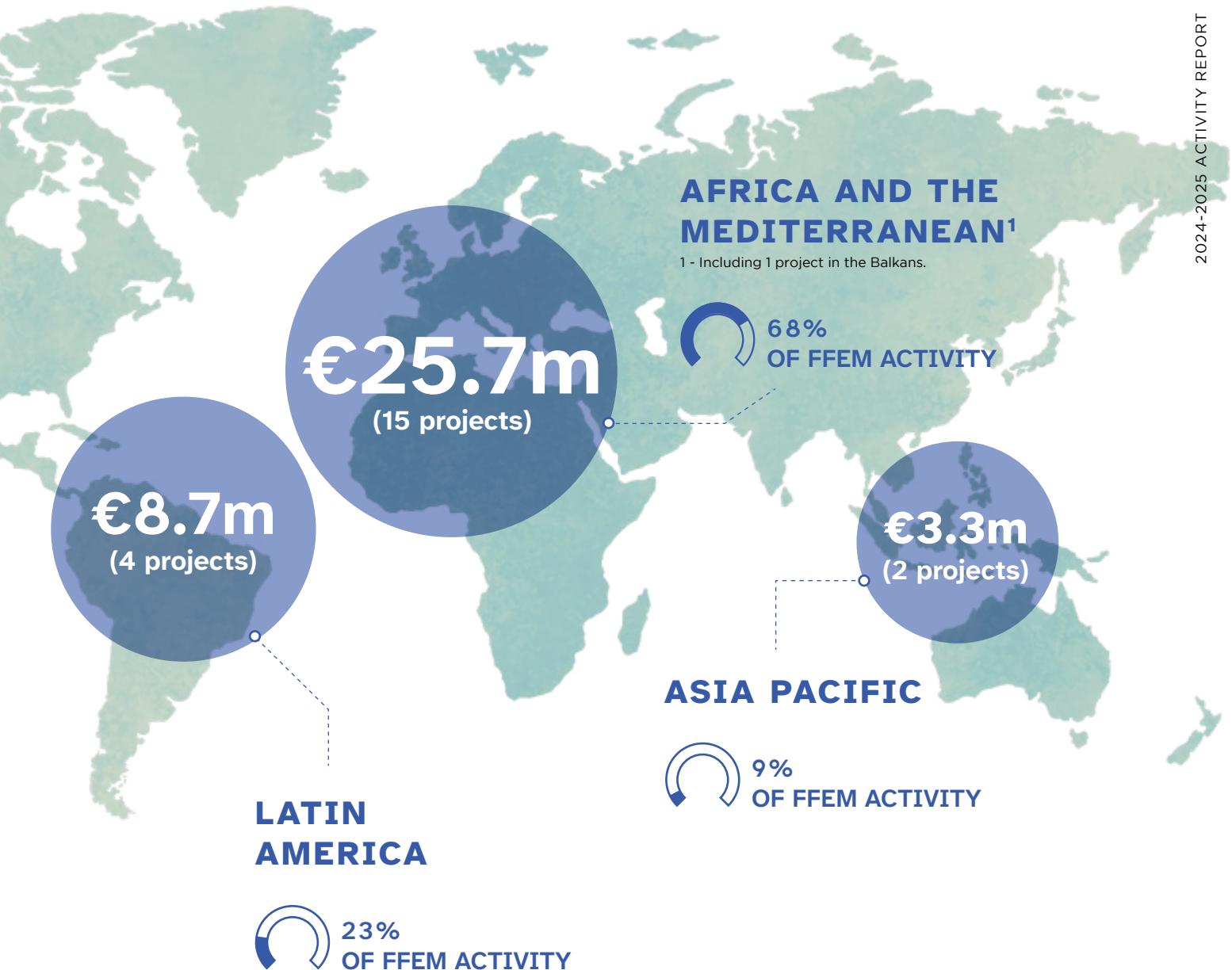
124

projects being
implemented on
31 December 2024

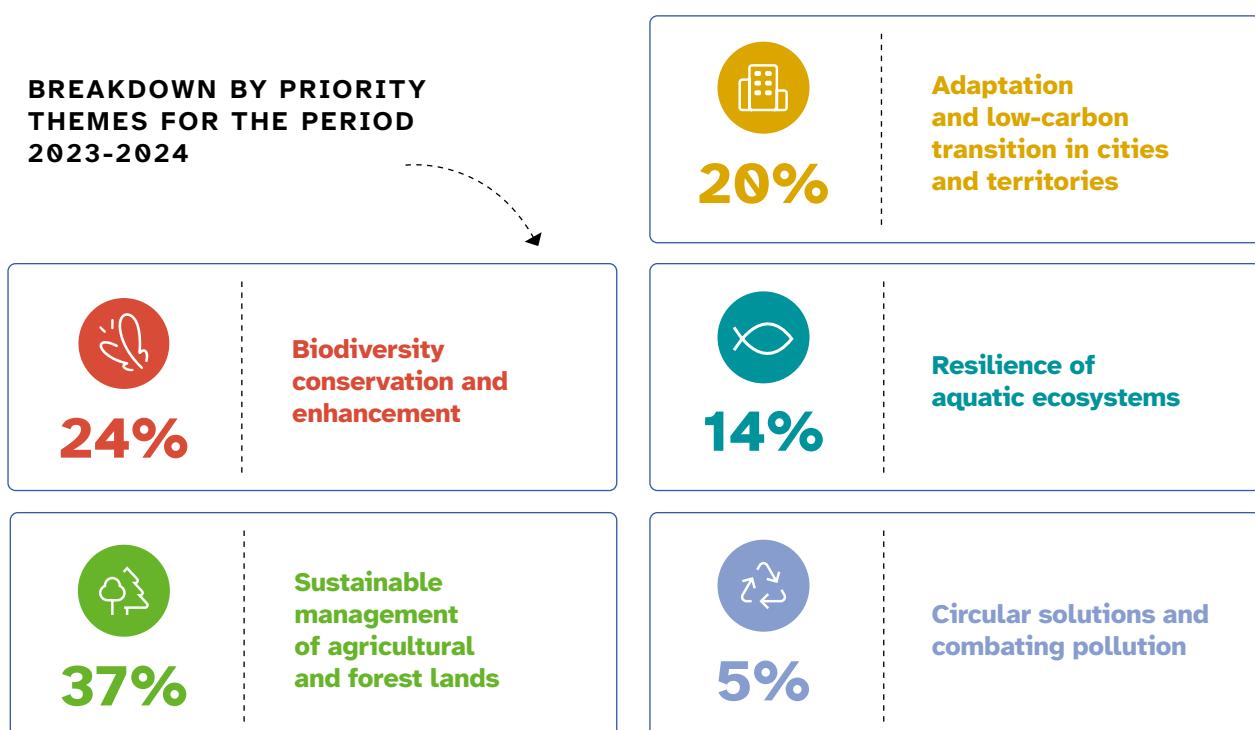


BREAKDOWN BY TYPE OF PROJECT INITIATOR IN 2023-2024





**BREAKDOWN BY PRIORITY THEMES FOR THE PERIOD
2023-2024**





Supporting international environmental commitments

The French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) initiates and supports innovative solutions to assist France and developing countries in implementing international environmental conventions.

The period 2024-2025 has seen significant *momentum* in global environmental diplomacy to which the FFEM has contributed.

- The **Treaty of the High Seas** (BBNJ¹) has finally been adopted. The FFEM, which has been involved in work on the high seas for more than 12 years, played a key role by supporting concrete operational solutions to prepare for its implementation.
- International negotiations continue around a **global treaty against plastic pollution**. A pioneer in this field, the FFEM supports pilot projects aimed at reducing plastics at source through awareness raising, regulatory change and the search for alternatives.
- Two years after the **Kunming-Montreal Agreement on the Global Biodiversity Framework**, COP16 in Cali highlighted the participation of local communities and reiterated the ambitious target of protecting 30% of land and oceans by 2030. The FFEM brings its strong expertise to this goal, particularly in shared governance of protected areas – a result of three decades of field experience.
- Regarding **climate**, while COP29 in Baku clarified Article 6 on carbon markets, the FFEM drew on fifteen years of projects linked to **carbon finance** to propose more robust, transparent and equitable models, providing social and environmental co-benefits.
- In forest territories, anticipating the entry into force of the **European Regulation on imported deforestation** (EUDR), the FFEM has for five years supported sustainable “zero-deforestation” cocoa value chains, reconciling company transition, decent income for producers and traceability for consumers.
- Finally, as a pioneer of **nature-based solutions**, the FFEM has long supported these approaches in various ecosystems – coastal, agricultural, forest or urban – and disseminates these good practices widely, particularly in agroecology, agroforestry, mangrove restoration and nature in cities, thereby responding to the Nexus assessment recommendations of the latest IPBES report.

All these advances and projects, aligned with international developments and implemented with a wide network of international and local partners are presented in the following pages.

1. *Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction*.



CHAPTER

01

Biodiversity: contributing to the 30x30 objective with local communities

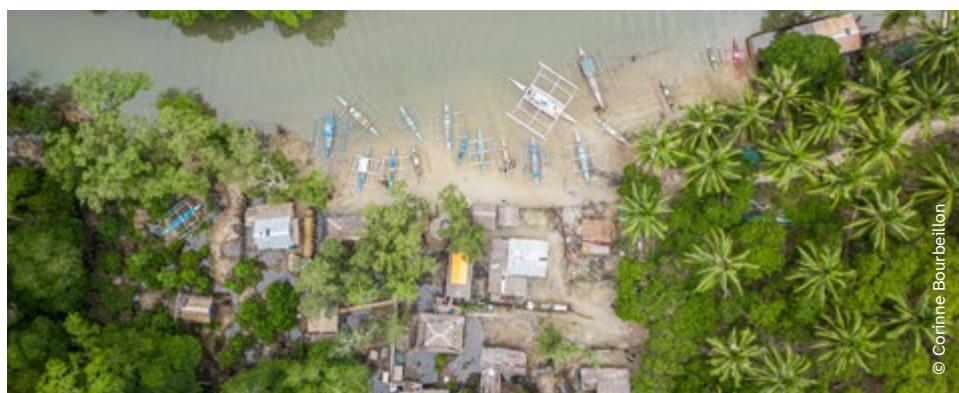


263

projects underway
involving total funding
of **€332.1m** in
support of biodiversity
(from 1994 to 2024,
including projects
with co-benefits)

IN BRIEF

The FFEM plays an active role in implementing France's biodiversity commitments, particularly the COP15 target of protecting 30% of land and 30% of oceans. Through its expertise and support for the development of innovative models of protected area management, integrating local populations and stakeholders, it strengthens the effectiveness of ecosystem conservation policies on land and at sea. For 30 years, it has funded pilot initiatives in developing countries, promoting shared and inclusive governance of these areas.



© Corinne Bourbeillon

IN ACTIONS

#1 In Pangatalan Bay, creating marine protected areas by and for communities

Project: **Sea Academy**

Location: **Philippines**

Duration: **2024-2028**

Funding by the FFEM: **€1,2m**

Beneficiaries: **Sulubaaï Environmental Foundation**



In the north of Palawan Island, in Shark Fin Bay, coral reefs have been severely degraded by illegal fishing, mangrove destruction and the impacts of climate change. In response, the Sulubaaï Environmental Foundation (SEF), with support from the **French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM)**, launched an initial pilot phase back in 2017. This programme, centred on Pangatalan islet, enabled the development of practical solutions, including the creation of community marine protected areas (MPAs), reef restoration (Sulu-Reef prostheses, fish lab), training of eco-guards, and the involvement of villages in marine resource management. The results were conclusive, with biodiversity clearly improving and strong support from local communities.

Building on these achievements, the project is now entering a second, more ambitious and structured phase, with one clear objective – to extend this integrated model to the whole of northern Palawan and beyond, while consolidating it scientifically and institutionally. This new stage, still supported by the FFEM, is based on three key focuses. The first objective is to **protect and restore ecosystems on a larger scale** by creating an interconnected network of community MPAs, managed locally, with strengthened protection levels and ecological restoration actions adapted to the specific characteristics of each territory. It is also a question of **strengthening the resilience of coastal communities** by developing sustainable aquaculture, supporting the emergence of new income-generating activities and establishing locally anchored participatory governance mechanisms. Finally, the project aims to **capitalise, transfer and disseminate** good practices through enhanced scientific monitoring, awareness-raising tools – particularly for young people – and skills transfer, in order to **make this model replicable** in other regions of the Philippines.

1bn

people worldwide benefit, at least indirectly, from the services provided by coral reefs.

The triangle between the Philippines, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea is home to

75%
of the planet's coral species.

INTERVIEW

Maria José Gonzales,
President, MAR Fund

“Protecting biodiversity is also a question of food security and local economy.”



The Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) stretches along the Atlantic coasts of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. The MAR Fund is a shared fund for these countries, responsible for financing and coordinating conservation actions within this remarkable ecosystem.

France is very active internationally in ensuring that the 30x30 target is met. Is a partnership such as that of the FFEM with the MAR Fund an effective lever to achieve this?

Yes, it is an effective way of translating global ambition into local action. Regional stakeholders have an in-depth knowledge of the realities on the ground, the cultural context and communities' needs. By collaborating with them, international agencies know that the conservation efforts they fund will be strategically aligned with global objectives, while being locally relevant and effective. Take the example of Cayman Crown Reef, an area of the Marine Protected Area Network (RAM) particularly rich in biodiversity. Thanks to the FFEM-MAR Fund partnership, we succeeded in having it recognised and protected by the two countries that border it. Guatemala established a 10-year closure zone there and Belize extended its Sapodilla Cayes marine reserve to include it. And for long-term protection we have also supported fishermen in diversifying their activities, to increase their resilience.

Why are marine protected areas essential for this region?

They help maintain the ecological connectivity on which many species depend for survival and prosperity. Protecting them is not just a question of conservation. It is also a question of food security and the local economy (fishing, tourism, etc.). ●●●



What role can private companies play?

They provide additional capital and a **long-term commitment** for more ambitious initiatives. For example, the BRIDGE project allowed us to model parametric insurance to cover fishing days lost by small-scale fishermen in Honduras. This insurance will be used to reduce the risk of concessional loans granted to these fishermen, who lack access to working

capital. They will gain financial literacy and, ideally, be able to obtain working capital from other financial institutions.



Find out more.



© Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust

#2 Restoring cross-border ecological corridors in the Balkans

Project: PONT Connect

Location: Albania, Greece and North Macedonia

Duration: 2025-2029

Funding from the FFEM: €2m

Beneficiaries: Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT)



Nestled in the heart of the Balkans, the Prespa and Ohrid lakes, together with the surrounding mountains, harbour remarkable biodiversity that is shared between Albania, Greece and North Macedonia. Despite the creation of

protected areas, these spaces are increasingly isolated due to ecosystem fragmentation – caused by urbanisation, infrastructure and the falling levels of the lakes. This loss of connectivity weakens terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and, more broadly, calls into question the viability of the protected areas themselves. To restore links between these natural areas, the FFEM, alongside the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation, supports the Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT) foundation project.

Called PONT Connect, it aims to identify and scientifically map priority ecological corridors, in order to restore **ecological connectivity in the region**. The project also provides for a conservation strategy drawn up with local NGOs, including actions beyond protected areas (AMCEZ). It also aims to support these NGOs in implementing this strategy, to organise sustainable collaborative governance between them and the national protected area authorities in the three countries, and then to ensure sustainable funding of the programme over 10 years, through communication activities and fundraising.

12 local NGOs

are supported to establish co-management of the identified ecological corridors.

#3 Preserving wetlands and waterbirds of the Sahel

Project: RESSOURCE+

Location: Mauritania, Senegal and Chad

Duration: 2024-2028

Funding from the FFEM: €1.7m

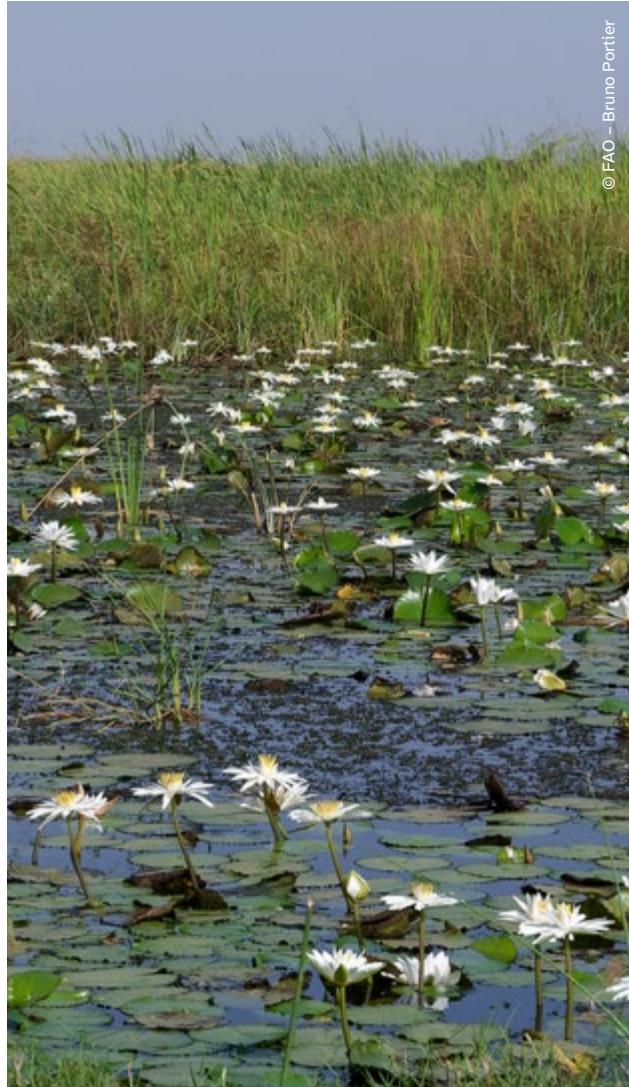
Beneficiaries: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



In the wetlands of the Sahel, waterbird populations are in decline. Threatened by climate change, desertification, urbanisation, the spread of invasive plants and hunting pressure, their disappearance would represent a major risk. It would compromise both the food security of local communities, who depend on them for food, and the balance of many ecosystems in Africa, but also in Europe and Asia, since most of these species are migratory.

The first phase of the RESSOURCE project, conducted from 2017 to 2021, improved knowledge of the dynamics of these populations at Sahel-wide scale, measured the socio-economic importance of hunting in the territories concerned and identified options for local people. It also led to **recognition and classification of major wetlands as protected areas**.

Three countries – Mauritania, Senegal and Chad – have embarked on phase 2 of the project, RESSOURCE+. With the help of a consortium led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Cirad, the French Biodiversity Agency (OFB), the NGOs Tour du Valat and Oiseaux Migrateurs du Paléarctique Occidental (OMPO), and financial support from the FFEM and the European Union. **These countries will in particular strengthen the monitoring and counting of waterbirds and put in place sustainable management plans for wetlands and their birds, with and for local communities.** They will also create a legal framework to limit hunters' take to certain thresholds.



© FAO – Bruno Portier

The number of waterbirds declined by around

40%

in the major Sahelian wetlands between 1960 and 2000.



RESSOURCE+ embodies the vision of the FFEM: to support integrated approaches (ecological, economic, and institutional) combining biodiversity protection and sustainable natural resource management, by and for local communities. By acting on Sahelian wetlands, this project contributes to the conservation of habitats essential to migratory birdlife and is in line with France's international commitments on biodiversity, in particular the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands and the AEWA Convention on African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.

> NICOLAS ROSSIN
“Biodiversity” Project Manager (FFEM)



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CHAPTER

02

Ocean: working for sustainable governance



© Lauric Thiault

57

projects underway
involving total funding
of **€66.6m** in support
of international waters
(from 1994 to 2024,
including projects with
co-benefits)

105

projects underway
involving total
funding of **€122.1m**
in support of
aquatic ecosystems
(from 1994 to 2024)

IN BRIEF

The high seas, which cover nearly half the planet's surface beyond national jurisdictions, remain among the least known and least protected spaces. To support the implementation of the Treaty of the High Seas (BBNJ¹), and in parallel with France hosting UNOC², the FFEM is committing to equitable and shared governance of the ocean. By supporting the production of scientific knowledge, it assists public decision-makers and civil society in the sustainable preservation of these ecosystems, which are vital for humanity and climate regulation.



© Maeva Bardy

1. *Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction.*

2. 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference.

IN ACTIONS

#1 Enabling countries in the Global South to take part in global ocean governance



Project: **Plankt'Eco**

Location: **West Africa**

Duration: **2023-2027**

Funding from the FFEM: **€2.2m**

Beneficiaries: **Tara Ocean Foundation**

Like forests, **oceans are the lungs and carbon sinks for the planet thanks to plankton**. Certain microorganisms that make up plankton capture CO₂ to produce oxygen. Plankton is also at the base of the food chain: without it, there would be no fish. Yet this microbiome is threatened by climate change, which acidifies the seas, and by overfishing which, by removing large predators, allows small plankton-eating animals to proliferate. Preserving it is now very important. Although it accounts for more than two-thirds of ocean biomass, plankton remains poorly understood. To deepen knowledge about the different species it comprises, their functions and their geographical distribution, the Tara Ocean Foundation conducted, from 2017 to 2021, with support from the FFEM, the "Oceanic Plankton, Climate and Development" project. Plankt'Eco, launched in 2023, is its continuation.

Building on the knowledge acquired during the first project, Plankt'Eco aims to develop tools for mapping plankton that are not dependent on costly sea **expeditions**. All countries will therefore be able to participate in identifying planktonic areas of interest (the Key Ocean Planktonic Areas, or KOPAs) and integrate this parameter into the definition and management of marine protected areas. The project also plans to develop dynamic models capable of studying plankton to predict changing fish stocks. This should **help political decision-making to encourage sustainable fishing**. Furthermore, the Tara Ocean Foundation and its partners aim to increase the capacity of countries in the Global South to participate in international ocean research. A first step has already been taken towards achieving this with the recent inauguration in late 2024 of the **West African Quantitative Aquatic Imaging Platform (PIQAAO)**, within the Dakar Thiaroye Oceanographic Research Centre (CRODT), in Senegal.

Oceans could capture up to

15Gt

CO₂eq per year¹.



To learn more about marine ecosystems.

INTERVIEW

André Abreu,

Director of International Affairs,
Tara Ocean Foundation

"Conservation tools and a fairer sharing of the benefits of high seas research."



André Abreu looks back at the issues of cooperation between the FFEM and the Tara Ocean Foundation, as the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) opened in June in Nice.

Why have the high seas – located outside national jurisdictions – become such an important issue?

The high seas, which cover 70% of the oceans, remain virtually unexplored. **We have identified less than 5% of the species that live there**. Until now, however, no legal framework existed to prevent other species from becoming extinct before they were even discovered. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, ratified in 1994, focused more on maritime borders and rights of passage. Faced with the threats of climate change, pollution and overfishing, it became necessary to establish a complementary text to protect this biodiversity.

What will the High Seas Biodiversity Conservation Treaty change?

This text, adopted in 2023, provides for the establishment of **area-based management tools** (marine protected areas, etc.) with new models of governance, both international and national. It will also improve Southern countries' access to scientific cooperation by strengthening their capacity to conduct research at sea. All this will be funded by a special fund financed by signatory countries and a benefit-sharing mechanism. For all products that reach the market thanks to a discovery made in the high seas (for example, a drug containing a phytoplankton molecule), companies will have to pay a contribution. •••

1. Source: CNRS, "L'océan stockerait davantage de carbone qu'estimé dans les précédentes études", December 2023.

•••

But for the BBNJ agreement to be implemented, it must first be ratified by at least 60 countries. Thanks to the immense mobilisation of the French diplomatic corps for UNOC, that threshold is now close to being reached. The treaty will then need to be given a governance system, definitions must be agreed at the first Conference of the Parties (COP), and collaborations put in place with regional organisations. **Since the text covers only the water column, and not the seabed, close cooperation will also have to be organised with the International Seabed Authority (ISA).**

How does the FFEM's engagement alongside the Tara Ocean Foundation illustrate France's commitment to the ocean?

France became involved in the treaty negotiations as early as 2012. At the same time, projects supported by the FFEM have made it possible to test local innovations, such as key plankton areas (KOPAs), to validate their relevance and applicability. This helps to inform the national position on these solutions and to ensure that this position carries weight in the debates. Having gained expertise, we can also help France to convince as many States as possible to ratify the treaty.

#2 Capitalising on science to launch high seas protection



Location: southwest Indian Ocean
 Duration: 2013-2016
 Funding from the FFEM: €1.3m
 Beneficiaries: Global Marine and Polar Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Led by IUCN and funded by the FFEM between 2013 and 2016, this project was the first to focus on high seas ecosystem conservation in the southwest Indian Ocean, beyond national jurisdictions. It explored the Walters Bank, a seamount located 700km off Madagascar. The expedition revealed still largely unknown biodiversity, with the discovery of poorly documented deep-sea species, and highlighted the ecological importance of these submarine reliefs as feeding, resting or passage areas for many bird and marine mammal species. **This pioneering work led several States in the region to ban bottom trawling in an area covering five seamounts, marking major progress for deep-sea conservation and regional high seas cooperation.**



© Thomas Vignaud

A guide to strengthen high seas governance

In 2024, the FFEM enhanced its series of scientific guides dedicated to aquatic ecosystems, increasing the total number of guides in the series to eight. These present the latest knowledge on various aquatic, marine, coastal and freshwater environments, while detailing the main threats and pressures they face. The guide called "Marine ecosystems: biodiversity conservation of high seas seamounts" shares the results of the IUCN project to support the establishment of an international governance and management framework for these environments which were previously virtually unexplored. For areas outside national jurisdiction, several scenarios were analysed and the proposal for hybrid governance, combining global and regional approaches, appears the most robust.



Discover the collection here.

#3 Bringing out hybrid governance for remarkable areas in the high seas

Project: SARGADOM

Location: North Atlantic Ocean and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean

Duration: 2021-2026

Funding from the FFEM: €2m

Beneficiaries: MarViva, Sargasso Sea Project Inc, University of Western Brittany



One is a bank of algae several million square kilometres wide floating in the middle of the north Atlantic. The other is a deformation of the surface of the Pacific Ocean, linked to a strong upwelling of deep waters off Central America. **The Sargasso Sea and the Thermal Dome are two of the most remarkable marine ecosystems.** Because they harbour unique biodiversity, they must be protected, particularly from pollution and overfishing. But this poses a challenge, as their size varies with the seasons. Mainly located in the high seas, they can expand into exclusive economic zones under the sovereignty of States. **Sustainable management of their resources can therefore only be effective if it results from governance that is both regional and international.** This is what the MarViva foundation and the Sargasso Sea Commission are proposing, promoting sustainable management of marine resources in these two regions, in connection with the University of Western Brittany.

The SARGADOM project, supported by the FFEM, first involves carrying out in-depth diagnostic analyses of these socio-ecosystems. The aim is to identify the value of the services they provide to the planet and to the populations that depend on them, to list the threats they face, to assess ways of reducing these risks and to better understand the obstacles



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as well as the factors favourable to the implementation of appropriate solutions.

An action programme and a new governance model can then be proposed and negotiated with States, economic sectors (fishing, navigation, etc.) and international ocean protection organisations.



64%

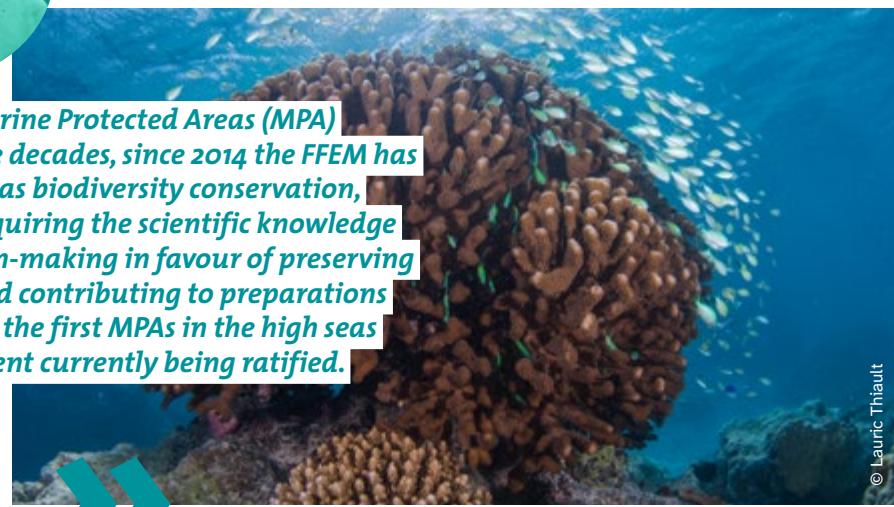
of the ocean's surface – i.e. half the surface of the planet – lies beyond national jurisdiction. This is what is known as the high seas.



With more than 200 Marine Protected Areas (MPA) supported for over three decades, since 2014 the FFEM has been supporting high seas biodiversity conservation, with the dual aim of acquiring the scientific knowledge needed to guide decision-making in favour of preserving high seas ecosystems and contributing to preparations for the establishment of the first MPAs in the high seas under the BBNJ agreement currently being ratified.

> JANIQUE ÉTIENNE

“Ocean Nature-based solutions” Project Manager (FFEM)



© Lauric Thiault



CHAPTER

Plastics and pollutants: reducing at source



© Janique Etienne/FFEM

29

projects for a total amount of **€36.8m** to combat pollution¹

1 - From 1994 to 2024, including projects with co-benefits.

IN BRIEF

Reducing plastic pollution at the point of production is a crucial global challenge to preserve our ecosystems. The FFEM supports innovative projects that reduce its use at source while developing recycling channels adapted to local realities. By contributing to negotiations on the future Treaty against plastic pollution, it helps to build sustainable, circular solutions to make regions more resilient and less polluted.



© Notre Grand Bleu

IN ACTIONS

#1 Taking action for a plastic-free Mediterranean Sea

Project: BeMed+



Location: Mediterranean Region (Albania and Tunisia)

Duration: 2024-2029

Funding by the FFEM: €1.8m

Beneficiaries: Beyond Plastic Med

The Mediterranean is now the most plastic-polluted sea in the world. Every day, nearly 630 tonnes of waste are dumped into it, endangering ecosystems and also economic activities such as fishing and tourism.

To tackle this challenge, the Beyond Plastic Med (BeMed) association has been supporting local initiatives to combat plastic pollution for several years. In 2024, the FFEM joined the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, IUCN and the MAVA Foundation to co-finance the BeMed+ project. The aim is to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders by providing them with technical and financial support, encourage experience sharing and disseminate reproducible solutions throughout the Mediterranean basin. Implemented by BeMed, in partnership with IUCN, Notre Grand Bleu (Tunisia), Surfrider Foundation Europe and INCA (Albania), the project concretely supports actions on the ground. Two calls for micro-initiatives have already supported 26 local projects, carried out by a variety of committed actors. A specific call for Mediterranean islands also resulted in the funding of seven new projects. At the same time, awareness-raising, training and networking activities have been carried out. Studies have also been conducted to better understand local issues in Tunisia and Albania, ranging from an analysis of the current state of scientific knowledge, to analysis of plastic waste legislation and mapping of part of the Shkumbin River in Albania to guide pilot projects.

Next steps include continuing exchanges between stakeholders, further field studies and preparing targeted action plans, particularly for the sports, hotel-restaurant (HoReCa) and waste management sectors.



INTERVIEW

Marine Collignon,

Deputy Director for Environment and Climate at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

“Attentive to realities on the ground, the FFEM looks beyond the North-South divide.”



Negotiations on an international treaty against plastic pollution resume this summer in Geneva. Marine Collignon, Deputy Director for Environment and Climate at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, reviews France's active role in these negotiations.

What position has France adopted in this future treaty?

As we reaffirmed on 10 June 2025 by signing the Nice Declaration, calling for an ambitious and binding treaty, our priority is to achieve a text that does not only deal with managing this type of waste, but tackles the problem at its source, namely reducing plastics. This means cutting production, banning single-use plastics and promoting eco-design. Simply addressing collection and processing is not enough, as we can see in France and Europe. Furthermore, that places the greatest responsibility on developing countries, who become the biggest victims of plastic accumulation in their dumps and waterways.

Beyond plastics, how is France involved in the various existing international anti-pollution conventions?

We promote an integrated approach. Because if banning one pollutant simply leads to it being replaced by another, this only shifts the problem. This is also the view of the 195 countries that met in Geneva in May 2025 for the triple Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. Several advances were achieved there including an extension of the list of banned persistent organic pollutants (POPs), strengthening of regulations on plastic waste exports, guidelines for greater transparency in trade in hazardous chemicals, etc. ●●●



How can FFEM projects influence international policies on plastics as well as other pollutants?
By testing solutions that are still little known, in order to verify their effectiveness, the FFEM is helping to make them viable. This also alleviates developing countries'

concerns about their costs. Because the projects it funds take account of local realities, are based on constructive exchanges with local communities and require socio-economic co-benefits, they demonstrate that environmental action can add real value.



© Janique Etienne/FFEM

4.8 to 12.7 Mt

of plastics end up in the oceans each year, equivalent to one rubbish truck each minute.



© Séverine Barde Carlier

#2 Reducing and sustainably managing plastic waste according to the Basel principles

Location: Senegal and Cape Verde

Duration: 2025-2028

Funding by the FFEM: €2m

Beneficiaries: Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (BRS)

In Cape Verde, Senegal and several French-speaking West African countries, plastic waste poses an increasing threat to human health and the environment. Soil, ocean and urban pollution is accelerating, while treatment and control capacities remain limited. In the framework of their commitment under the Basel Convention, these countries decided to act to address this challenge.

With support from the FFEM and several partners including the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, an innovative project was launched in late 2023 to strengthen their capacity to better control plastic waste crossing borders, ensure safer and more sustainable management and reduce production. The project also supports them in implementing new international obligations on plastics and prepares them for the forthcoming global agreement against this pollution.

On the ground, this translates into very concrete actions, such as reinforced customs controls, development of alternatives to single-use plastic, creation of small local sorting and recovery channels, as well as awareness campaigns and training for public actors and citizens. By 2026, the objective is to reduce the amounts of plastic produced and released into the environment, limit illegal trafficking and increase the share of waste managed in an environmentally sound manner.

This project marks an important step, as it is one of the first in West Africa to translate international commitments into concrete local solutions. Support from the FFEM has enabled it to offer reproducible and effective methods, contributing to a cleaner future for populations and ecosystems.

#3 Rethinking plastic consumption in collaboration with producers

Project: Plastic Costa Rica



Location: Costa Rica

Duration: 2022-2025

Funding by the FFEM: €2m

Beneficiaries: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

As the leading plastics importer in Central America, Costa Rica faces significant waste production, nearly a quarter of which ends up in nature. To preserve its landscapes and biodiversity, the country has banned single-use plastics in its national parks since 2021. Municipalities have drawn up management plans, but implementation remains difficult.

To strengthen public action, the project – led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and supported by the FFEM – has carried out five technical studies to inventory the plastics used and better guide and prioritise reduction policies. It has also mobilised all stakeholders – civil society, public and private sectors, including the companies responsible for producing, importing and distributing 80% of plastic materials – to develop concrete measures. These measures include establishing an extended producer responsibility (EPR) system, adopting norms and standards to structure the collection, sorting, treatment and recovery sectors. At the same time, pilot projects are supported to promote reuse, alternatives to plastics and the structuring of local recycling channels. Awareness campaigns have also been carried out to inform citizens about the impact of their plastic consumption. Finally, a recovery centre has been modernised in the metropolitan region, doubling its processing capacity and extending service coverage to three municipalities. The project is part of a broader transition to a circular and green economy, fostering innovation and sustainable jobs.



25%

of plastic waste ends up in natural environments,

representing

40,000 t/year.



This project demonstrates multi-stakeholders lifecycle based solutions, as the key to combating plastic pollution is to prevent it from being generated in the first place. It is therefore in line with the ambition for a new plastics treaty. It also contributes to the implementation of the Basel, Minamata, and Stockholm conventions by reducing pollutant emissions and introducing environmentally and socially sustainable practices for the management of hazardous waste.

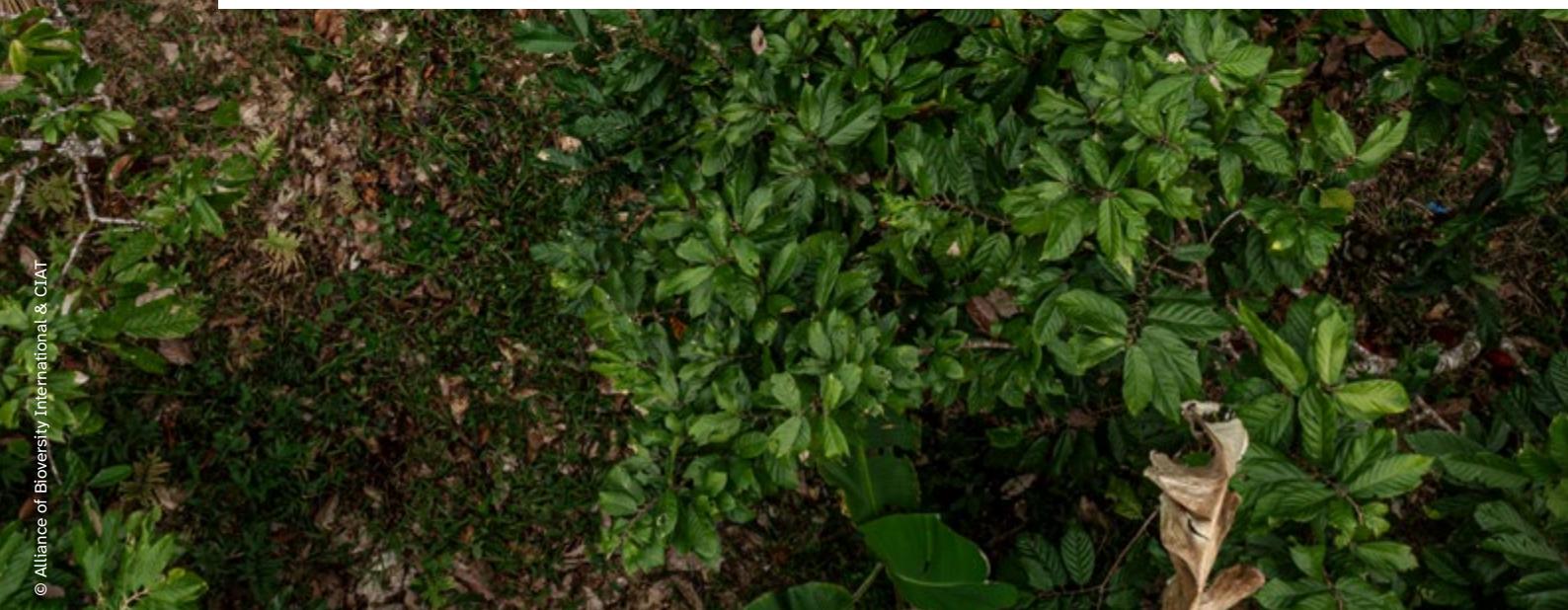
> DIANE MENARD

"Pollutants Circular Economy Ozone" Project Manager (FFEM)





Forest: preserving, managing and producing differently



IN BRIEF

30%
of FFEM funding
goes towards forests¹

127
projects worth
€165.8m to combat
deforestation from
1994 to 2024¹

1. As of 31 December 2024.

Climate, biodiversity, land degradation, human rights: combating deforestation lies at the centre of multiple issues addressed by the COPs, the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and France's objective of ending it by 2030. The FFEM is working with its partners to develop sustainable models for managing territories and value chains (agricultural and forestry), combining forest conservation, traceability, inclusion of local communities and socio-economic development.



IN ACTIONS

#1 Developing sustainable finance to support forest guardians in Amazonia



Project: **Vital reserves**

Location: Bolivia, Guyana, Ecuador, Peru

Duration: 2023-2027

Funding by the FFEM: €2.5m

Beneficiaries: **Conservation International (CI)**

Mechanisms such as carbon markets can support reforestation actions. However, no carbon finance mechanism currently values the long-term preservation of intact tropical forests, although they are essential. In some regions such as Amazonia, these low-deforestation forests harbour unique biodiversity. They are genuinely vital spaces for humanity. Their soils and old-growth vegetation are rich in irreplaceable carbon. If they were to disappear, they would be unable to contribute to achieving the 2050 carbon neutrality goal. Indigenous peoples or local communities (IPLCs) most often protect these forests, that are threatened by extractive activities, illegal logging or agricultural expansion. Their crucial role deserves recognition.

This is why the FFEM has committed, with the French government, to supporting IPLCs in the Amazon biome, in partnership with Conservation International and four countries in the region: Bolivia, Guyana, Ecuador and Peru. **This project aims to identify and protect “vital reserves”, i.e. areas with high forest cover and low deforestation (HFLD), as well as ecological corridors linking them, in order to conserve them.** To ensure sustainable management of these areas by IPLCs and environmental authorities, the project also provides for the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms, some of which will eventually be managed by these communities. They will therefore be able to benefit from direct and sustainable income.

Options under consideration include: savings solutions based on marketing Brazil nuts or ethical tourism, payments for environmental services, creation of community development funds, biodiversity certificates, support for existing conservation trust funds, etc. In total, 17 financing options are being studied. This project could serve as a model for other protection initiatives in tropical forests, mangroves or peatlands.

The project intervention area covers

4,752,000ha.

It represents over

234Mt

of irrecoverable carbon.

INTERVIEW

Marie Ange Ngo Bieng,
ecologist at Cirad

**“The Selva Maya,
a model of
community
management.”**



In 1996, Guatemala entrusted indigenous peoples with the management of concessions in its protected forest areas. Marie Ange Ngo Bieng, ecologist at Cirad, explains why this case is exemplary.

Community-based ecosystem management does not always guarantee success.

Why does the Guatemalan model work?

In the mid-1990s, after the civil war, the Guatemalan government chose to empower the local communities of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Rather than displacing them, it entrusted them with managing forest concessions in the reserve's multiple-use zone, while precisely defining authorised activities under strict rules: sustainable timber harvesting and agriculture limited to subsistence. As a result, deforestation rates are now virtually zero within these concessions. By contrast, neighbouring areas are severely degraded by intensive livestock farming, illegal fires and drug trafficking. ●●●



© CI (Conservation International)



What does the ConForMA project, implemented by Cirad, the Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP) and their partners, consist of?

Supported by the FFEM and the MTEBFMP¹, the project contributes to diversifying activities in the Maya Biosphere Reserve's community concessions, in order to improve the resilience of forests and populations. Today, forestry mainly involves mahogany and cedar. Yet local people could benefit from outlets for around 10 other species. The marketing of non-timber products, such as the maya nut, and the development of ecotourism would further promote the inclusion of women and young people. The project also plans to open dialogue with livestock farmers to limit pressure on forests. Finally, it will widely communicate the value of the model, to encourage its replication and sustainability at national scale.

Is the climate objective also taken into account?

Yes. Guatemala's main CO₂ emissions are linked to forest degradation and loss. Combating deforestation therefore helps to limit its climate impact. It is also a guarantee of adaptation for local populations.

1- Ministry of Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forests, Marine Affairs and Fisheries.

#2 Promoting a fair trade cocoa industry with zero deforestation in West Africa

Project: ÉQUITÉ Cacao



Location: West Africa

Duration: 2024-2028

Funding by the FFEM: €3m

Beneficiaries: Commerce Équitable France

Faced with soil degradation, exacerbated by climate change, the ÉQUITÉ programme offers a sustainable alternative by supporting fair-trade value chains incorporating environmental criteria. Launched in 2016 by Commerce Équitable France and AVSF (Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières), with support from the FFEM and AFD, it supports the agroecological transition of agricultural value chains in West Africa (Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin).

The first two phases significantly improved producers' incomes and disseminated innovative practices such as agroforestry, bio-input production and the recovery of agricultural waste. These approaches have helped restore soil fertility, increase yields and reduce the use of chemical inputs.

Building on these results, the FFEM and AFD are launching a third phase. This aims to broaden the dissemination of agroecological innovations, train several hundred technicians, strengthen producer networks and promote institutional dialogue in favour of family farming. Priority will be given to developing fair-trade cocoa guaranteed "zero deforestation", in response to the new European regulation, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.

To facilitate adoption of these practices, a loan facility is being put in place, enabling cooperatives to access the working capital needed to finance labour and equipment for the establishment of more resilient agroforestry systems. In addition, several innovative solutions are already emerging, such as the creation of units to process agricultural waste into compost or biorepellents.



© Commerce Équitable France

Some cocoa and cashew producers, beneficiaries of the ÉQUITÉ programme, have seen their incomes increase by

90%².

15%

fewer diseases and pest attacks thanks to the agroecological innovations developed (notably biorepellents)².



#3 Supporting participatory forestry focused on households

Project: RIFoP

Location: Republic of the Congo, Cameroon

Duration: 2022-2027

Funding by the FFEM: €2m

Beneficiaries: Nature+



Cameroon was one of the first countries in the Congo Basin to adopt the concept of "community forestry". In 1994, it offered rural villages the opportunity to secure a portion of the non-permanent forest estate and to conduct income-generating activities there. But although the model was promising, its implementation encountered several challenges and the results have been mixed. The regulations provided for supervised timber harvesting, but this requirement was not always respected. Moreover, the local development benefits remained limited, which hindered sustainable ownership of the system by communities.

The RIFoP project ("Strengthening and innovation in participatory forestry for the benefit of local communities around protected areas in the Congo Basin"), launched around the Odzala-Kokoua National Park in Congo and the Dja Biosphere Reserve in Cameroon, proposes to reinvent this model. Led by the NGO Nature+ and funded by the FFEM, this project no longer relies on villages but on households with agricultural activity. It encourages them to rehabilitate forest cover by converting to agroforestry and promotes the development of certified organic value chains (cocoa, coffee, etc.), with high profit potential. It now remains to determine how to include this alternative model in national legislation.

45

partnership agreements signed with farming households.

+50%

increase in the number of trees in agroforests, while clearing has been halved.



The RIFoP project is firmly committed to finding concrete and sustainable solutions to halt deforestation in the Congo Basin. Based on the observation that agricultural clearing is one of the major causes of forest cover loss, the project is bringing about a paradigm shift by focusing on the family unit rather than the community. This household-centred approach allows agroforestry practices to be better anchored in local social and economic realities, while enhancing the self-development capacities of local populations. It is an exemplary project in the fight against deforestation, combining social innovation, economic development and ecological restoration.

➤ XAVIER DEBADE
"Forests and ecosystem restoration" Project Manager
(FFEM)



© Cindy Simoni



CHAPTER

05

Climate: meeting the carbon finance challenge



© Séverine Barde Cartier

276
projects for a total
amount of **€343.9m**
in favour of the climate¹

19
projects worth
€25.6m testing
carbon finance¹

1 - From 1994 to 2024,
including projects with
co-benefits

IN BRIEF

The number of extreme climate events is increasing, underlining the urgency of sharply reducing emissions while protecting nature, our best long-term ally for adaptation. In this context, marked by the clarification of Article 6 on carbon markets at COP29 and controversies over the validity of certain carbon credits, the FFEM is rigorous in its action. It supports multi-benefit low-carbon projects based on scientific methods and robust monitoring, guaranteeing their real impact and sharing benefits with local communities. The FFEM is thereby promoting carbon finance that is robust and delivers environmental and social co-benefits for a just and effective transition.



IN ACTIONS

#1 Towards a carbon methodology for eco-construction using Nubian vaults

Project: **ACACIAS**



Location: Benin, Ghana

Duration: 2023-2028

Funding by the FFEM: €850,000

Beneficiaries: Association La Voûte Nubienne (AVN)

For more than 20 years, the Association La Voûte Nubienne (AVN) has been promoting a construction method dating back over three millennia – the Nubian vault. This raw-earth building technique has numerous advantages. It requires no wood and therefore does not contribute to deforestation and uses no energy-intensive corrugated iron or cement. Buildings constructed using this method can last at least 100 years. Above all, they provide thermal comfort that eliminates the need for heating and air-conditioning.

Because they contribute both to climate change mitigation and adaptation, while creating jobs and supporting employment for young people, AVN is planning to establish a carbon credit mechanism based around this construction method. Through this mechanism, companies could voluntarily offset their residual emissions by helping to finance decent, low-carbon housing for low-income African populations, particularly in rural areas.

120

houses built and 800 local jobs created in Benin in 2024¹.

1. Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju3gdVhOt50

Even if future inhabitants are able to supply materials (earth, stones, water) and unskilled labour for construction, they face real difficulties in raising the money needed to cover the remaining costs: the wages of the specialist masons and trained workers, as well as some finishing elements (doors, windows, etc.). The association has already shown that assistance covering 15% to 20% of the construction cost – around €370 – was sufficient incentive. But it still needs to be financed. This could be achieved by registering Nubian vault constructions on the voluntary carbon market. Supported by the FFEM, the ACACIAS project is developing a new carbon certification method to financially value the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions generated by earthen construction (around 0.8tCO₂eq/m², or 20tCO₂eq for a 25m² house²). To accelerate financing for new construction, the project includes a system allowing for the pre-sale of carbon credits. This is needed because more than 80% of CO₂ savings are made during the 30 years of building use², while funding needs arise as soon as construction begins.

2. Source : La Voûte Nubienne – “Link between carbon offset mechanisms and financial incentives for eco-construction in the Sahel region of Africa”, June 2020.



The challenge of the ACACIAS project is to combine access to affordable bioclimatic housing, built using traditional methods, with access to carbon credits of high additionality for the Sustainable Development Goals, which in turn requires new financial mechanisms that are still being developed and are volatile.

The current dual challenge of reducing carbon emissions while providing housing for low-income families in the Sahel region and beyond requires sponsors and pioneers: the FFEM has played its part alongside the Association La Voûte Nubienne (AVN). The task now is to find informed buyers willing to scale up the project.

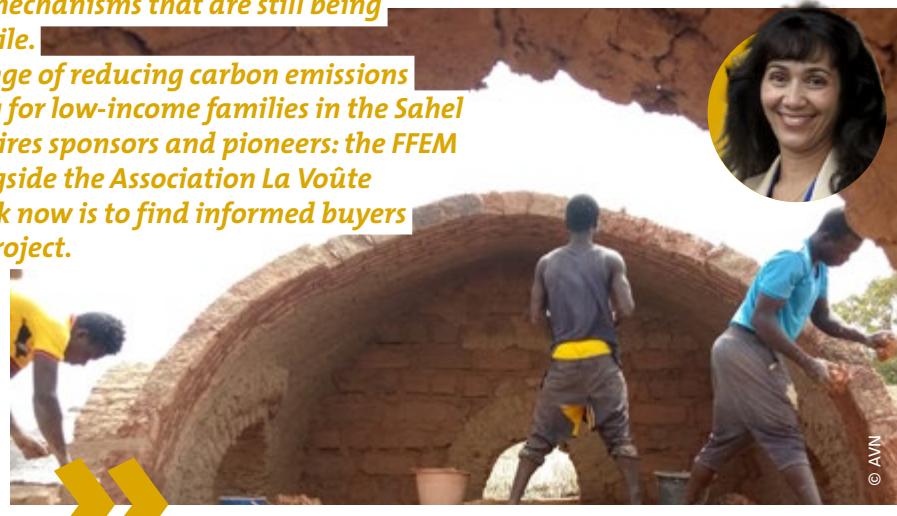
> AURÉLIE GHUELDRÉ

“Cities and Territories for Climate and Nature”

Project Manager (FFEM)

DJAMILA IOUALALEN-COLLEU

“Sustainable Cities” Officer
(Ministry of Ecological Transition – DAEI)



© AVN



INTERVIEW

Thomas Mélonio,

Executive Director for Innovation,
Strategy and Research

“An essential innovative role to feed into the COPs.”



For AFD, the FFEM represents an important lever for innovation. Its experimental projects and their outcomes are monitored with particular attention, as highlighted by Thomas Mélonio, Executive Director for Innovation, Strategy and Research.

“The FFEM plays an exploratory role upstream of international climate negotiations, demonstrating the feasibility, effectiveness and viability of innovative solutions. **A number of technologies and methods now used to meet climate objectives were previously validated by pilot projects funded by the FFEM.** Decision-makers need proof of results before investing in a new tool.

Take renewable energies: experiments conducted in the 2000s showed they could be profitable, as well as ecological, and therefore attractive to investors. It then became possible to set targets for their expansion. More recently, the FFEM has funded projects demonstrating that, under certain conditions, carbon credits work. Similarly, it is examining what makes a protected area successful in the long term.

Moreover, the FFEM has identified and invested in several niche innovations that will no doubt become increasingly important in the coming years. One example is waste from the digital sector. Although it is growing rapidly, it remains largely overlooked by most international development players. The number of FFEM-funded projects in this area is increasing, such as the WEECAM project, launched in 2017 in Cameroon to treat waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). The FFEM also takes an innovative approach to preventing and treating plastic waste. This issue is often treated as a local problem, whereas it is a global challenge, contributing to ocean pollution. New solutions must therefore be developed, since those available today are not up to the task.”

#2 A biological corridor that gives credit to reforestation



Project: HUILA

Location: Colombia, Huila Department

Duration: 2004-2010 and 2011-2018

Funding by the FFEM: €1.2m and €1.4m

Beneficiaries: CORMAGDALENA

Through two successive projects between 2004 and 2018, the FFEM supported capacity building for the authorities of the Rio Magdalena watershed and Colombian authorities to benefit from international carbon offset mechanisms.

The REDD+ Huila pilot covers about 25,370 hectares in the Colombian Andes, representing 0.1% of the region, creating a biological corridor between the Puracé and Cueva de los Guácharos national parks. The main stakeholders are the Regional Autonomous Corporation of the Rio Grande de la Magdalena (CORMAGDALENA), the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Alto Magdalena (CAM), and the international branch of the French National Forestry Office for the Andean and Central American countries (ONF Andina), responsible for implementation, along with local landowning communities.

The project includes access to capital for agricultural investments, technical assistance to improve production systems, income diversification, and support for marketing local products. The project – which is undergoing verification at the time of this report’s publication – hopes to soon be awarded its first batch of carbon credits for reducing deforestation by 653 hectares between 2014 and 2020. **In addition to carbon credits, it has engaged in certification of its positive impacts on local communities and biodiversity, under the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) standard.**

25,370ha

– the area covered by the project in the Colombian Andes.



© ONF Andina

#3 Carbon credits to protect the Bijagos



Location: **Guinea-Bissau**
 Duration: **2017-2021**
 Funding by the FFEM: **€1.4m**
 Beneficiaries: **BioGuinea Foundation**

Guinea-Bissau harbours exceptional biodiversity, from vast mangroves to the best-preserved forest in West Africa, wetlands of global importance and the Bijagos archipelago and a UNESCO biosphere reserve. This region is home to the main nesting site for green turtles in West Africa and a unique population of marine hippopotamuses.

To protect these ecosystems, the country has put in place a National Protected Areas System (SNAP), covering 26% of its territory, managed by the Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas (IBAP). To ensure its long-term financing, the BioGuinea Foundation (FBG), an independent trust fund, was created in 2011. The current project aims to make the FBG fully operational, to capitalise its endowment fund (€5.86m) and to finance a pilot grant programme in two Bijagos marine protected areas.

With support from the FFEM, this initiative strengthens the sustainability of the SNAP and supports local communities.

An innovative component of the project is based on blue carbon, i.e. the capacity of mangroves to capture CO₂. By monetising this function, a pilot project allowed certified carbon credits to be issued. Their sale generated nearly €3m, directly reinvested in conservation. This mechanism shows that environment and development can go hand in hand, supporting both ecosystems and the local communities that depend on them.



© Séverine Barde Cartier



© Séverine Barde Cartier



Nature-based solutions: providing ecosystem services to populations



© Asamaan Production

20

ongoing projects
for a total amount of
€39.9m dedicated
to nature-based
solutions¹

18%

of projects
supported by
the FFEM use
nature-based
solutions¹

1. As of 31 December 2024.

IN BRIEF

Rising sea levels, coastline retreat, freshwater salinisation, land degradation, increasing human pressures and extreme events: ecosystems and their populations are on the front line. The FFEM supports nature-based solutions, particularly in coastal areas, cities, and agricultural and forestry regions, to strengthen their resilience. These solutions are the best tools to combat climate change and its effects, while preserving biodiversity, water, and natural resources for the well-being of populations.



© Asamaan Production

IN ACTIONS

#1 Strengthening ecosystem resilience in the Mediterranean

Project: RESCOM



Location: Albania, Italy, Montenegro, Morocco,

Tunisia, Turkey

Duration: 2023-2027

Funding by the FFEM: €1.5m

Beneficiaries: Tour du Valat association

A true global biodiversity hotspot, the Mediterranean basin suffers from climate change, sea level rise, pollution, poorly controlled urban development, overtourism and overexploitation of resources.

All this impacts the environment, but also the populations, who see their livelihoods deteriorate. The RESCOM ("Strengthening ecosystem resilience in the Mediterranean") project, led by the CMB (Mediterranean Biodiversity Consortium), aims to preserve and restore natural environments to maintain the services they provide to local communities.

A pilot site has been chosen in each of the 6 participating countries (the Special Environmental Protection Area of Patara in Turkey, for example). Each site benefits from the support of experts from CMB partner institutions: MedPAN, the PIM initiative, IUCN, AIFM, MedWet, Tour du Valat, Conservatoire du Littoral. Teams are encouraged to collaborate with a diversity of stakeholders, at all levels – local, regional and national – including policy-makers, NGOs, local communities, etc., following a rigorous and

reproducible working method. After analysing the ecosystems and their vulnerability and identifying particularly threatened socio-ecosystems, a call for small projects was launched with civil society organisations (CSOs) to design and implement innovative solutions in these pilot sites. The project also provides for the creation of a Think and Do Tank, to encourage the sharing of tools and mechanisms between the different sites.

More than a third

of Mediterranean basin species are endemic, meaning that they are found nowhere else in the world.

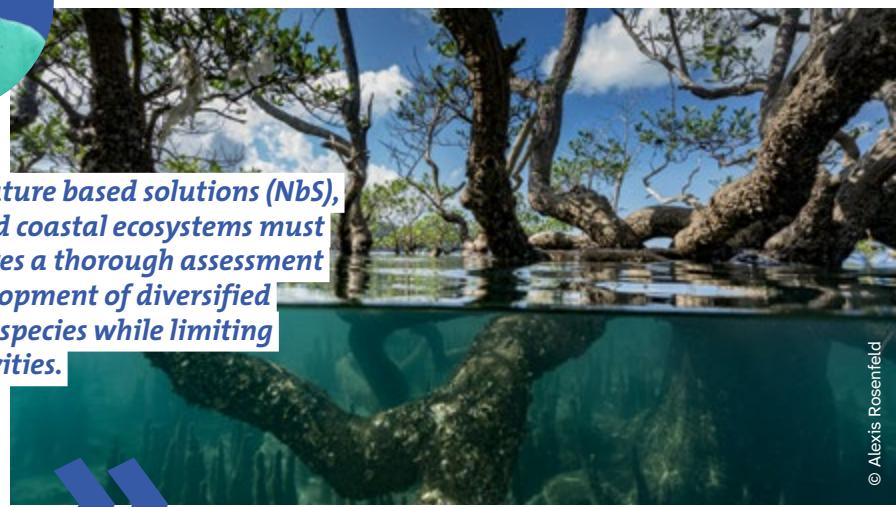
Source: tourduvalat.org/dossier-newsletter/le-rapport-mediterranee-vivante/



Before implementing nature based solutions (NbS), the health of marine and coastal ecosystems must be preserved. This requires a thorough assessment that allows for the development of diversified solutions based on local species while limiting destructive human activities.

> JANIQUE ÉTIENNE

“Ocean Nature-based solutions” Project Manager
(FFEM)



© Alexis Rosenfeld

INTERVIEW

Jean Goepp,
Director of the Nébédøy association

“The transition zone, between the mangroves and the continental biotope, concerns us most.”



The Senegalese association Nébédøy is an example of a civil society organisation which, following support from the Small-Scale Initiatives Programme (PPI), the FFEM and the French Committee of IUCN, succeeded in gaining enough credibility to obtain direct support from the FFEM. Jean Goepp, its Director, looks back on this journey.

In addition to the RESCO-Saloum project, what actions are you taking in the region to protect coastal and forest ecosystems?

We have contributed to regenerating the mangrove and they are now in good condition. Replanting mangroves is especially useful for educating children about the environment. The transition zone, between the mangroves and the continental biotope, concerns us most. As the sea rises, soils become salinised. We are therefore introducing more salt-resistant plants there. But we are also working in areas other than the delta. In the centre of the country, for example, we have worked with women's cooperatives to create straw charcoal, a substitute for wood charcoal. And in the north, we have installed more than 30,000 improved cooking stoves, which require two to three times less wood for cooking. This helps reduce pressure on forests.

What role did support from the PPI play? Why are these types of programme important for local initiatives in countries in the Global South?

Until recently, even though we had a strategic plan and solutions, we were too small for conventional donors to trust our capacity to manage a substantial budget. The PPI, set up by the FFEM and the French Committee of IUCN France, came at the right time. The team listened to us, offered us training and exchange visits with other project initiators. Above all, the fact of having received several PPI grants was proof of seriousness to the European Union, then to the FFEM, to obtain larger amounts.

#2 Adapting to climate change in the Pacific Islands through ecosystem-based solutions

Project: PEBACC+

Location: Southwest Pacific

Duration: 2022-2026

Funding by the FFEM: €1.8m

Beneficiaries: Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Their isolation in the Pacific islands make them particularly dependent on their natural resources. For both their food security as well as their economy, they must proactively tackle the consequences of climate change on water quality, fish stocks, forest and mangrove biodiversity... This is what the PEBACC+ project, led by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), sets out to do.

This project follows on from an initial PEBACC launched in 2015, which led to the development of an ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) strategy to climate change in Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. The aim is to continue this approach, in other words to implement ecosystem-based adaptation solutions (EbA solutions) that optimise the services provided by ecosystems (coastal erosion control, natural water filtration, local cooling, etc.). And this is now all happening on a larger scale since New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna have been integrated into the project. The sharing of experiences and lessons learned is especially important as this type of approach is rarely proposed in overseas territories.



Find out more about the RESCO-SALOUM project

#3 Adapting agricultural practices to climate change through agroecology

Projet : SUP-MED

Localisation : Egypt, Lebanon

Durée : 2020-2024

Financement du FFEM : €1.7m

Bénéficiaire : CIHEAM Montpellier



In Egypt and Lebanon, water stress, desertification, and overexploitation of groundwater resources threaten the sustainability of agriculture and undermine the incomes of rural households. Stemming from the momentum of COP21 and part of the French “4 per 1,000” initiative, the SupMed project, led by CIHEAM Montpellier, is active in two pilot areas: the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon and the governorate of Luxor in Egypt. **It has a dual objective: to preserve water resources and improve the socio-economic resilience of farmers.**

The project is based on six areas of focus: raising awareness of climate change and agroecological practices; co-developing adaptation strategies; using a decision-making tool based on bioeconomic modeling; implementation by volunteer farmers; dissemination of results and multi-stakeholder governance.

450

farmers in Egypt and

430

farmers in Lebanon have signed up to the charter by signing a voluntary commitment to adaptation practices.

The results of the project highlighted by the ex-post evaluation are numerous: improved irrigation infrastructure, adoption of appropriate agroecological practices, institutional capacity building, and development of national agricultural strategies. Agroecological practices - better irrigation water management, crop diversification, use of organic inputs and early-maturing or improved seeds - have proven their impact on improving water use efficiency and soil fertility.

The exemplary and innovative SupMed project has enabled the adoption of innovations that impact the practices of farmers, researchers, and public policies and provide decision-makers with tools to anticipate and support the transition to sustainable agriculture in the Middle East. It is now being scaled up with the AFD-funded Aradina project in Lebanon.

The volume of water withdrawn at the territorial level has decreased by up to

80%

in Lebanon and up to

25%

in Egypt.



The Sup-Med project is a remarkable example of promoting agroecological practices that value farmers' knowledge and expertise, while producing results that combine research-based innovations with the agricultural traditions of the beneficiaries, with the strategic objective of scaling them up.

> **EMMANUELLE POIRIER-MAGONA**
 “Sustainable Agriculture”
 Project Manager (FFEM)



The Small-Scale Initiatives Programme: mobilising environmental civil society in the Global South



Led by the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) and the French Committee of IUCN, the Small-Scale Initiatives Programme (PPI) supports African civil society in its biodiversity projects. A unique approach, as explained by Nicolas Rossin, Biodiversity Project Manager at the FFEM, and Paul Estève, PPI Coordinator at the French Committee of IUCN.

What is the Small-Scale Initiatives Programme (PPI)?

Nicolas Rossin: This programme was created in 2006 to provide a financing mechanism adapted to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). These NGOs, foundations, associations, trade unions and other local cooperatives are often excluded from conventional international aid circuits because of their small size, limited capital and/or weak structure. **The FFEM itself cannot fund them directly. Yet their detailed knowledge of the field and of both environmental and social issues makes them key actors in identifying relevant, concrete and realistic solutions, suited to the needs of populations.** This is also what appealed to the IUCN French National Committee, which has positioned itself as a key partner to structure and manage this programme.

Paul Estève: The PPI is particularly suited to the environmental protection ecosystem in sub-Saharan Africa. This region of the world harbours exceptional biodiversity, with varied ecosystems, ranging from tropical forests to savannahs, including marine and coastal areas. Their conservation is crucial in the face of increasing human pressures (overexploitation of resources, deforestation, poaching, etc.) and the effects of climate change.

Why do CSOs find it difficult to access international aid?

N.R.: As an example, FFEM grants amount to several hundred thousand euros and are only provided as co-financing to organisations able to raise at least the same amount themselves or via other donors. CSOs do not necessarily have these budgets.

€17m

of FFEM co-financing (€33m in total for the programme)
has been granted to 214 African CSOs.

305

projects supported, across

five priority themes:

conservation of endangered species, anti-poaching, resolution of human-wildlife conflicts, ecosystem conservation, creation/management of protected areas.



To find out more about PPIs.



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P.E.: There can also be **structural problems**. Many lack **administrative, financial and logistical management skills**, which hampers their development. Moreover, their visibility is limited and their impact often underestimated. In addition to financial support (on average €32,000, for an average implementation period of 20 months), we provide **training courses tailored** to each organisation's needs, as well as **technical support**. We particularly help beneficiaries to formulate a **long term strategy**. The programme is long term. It offers the possibility of receiving several successive grants. By helping them to structure their organisation, sustain their actions and gain credibility, **we also help them to find other sources of funding, to scale up**.

After almost 20 years of initiatives, what is your assessment of the PPI?

N.R.: In two decades, we have funded and supported **more than 300 biodiversity projects in 28 sub-Saharan African countries**, from Cape Verde to Madagascar, via Mauritania, Niger and Burundi. The PPI has helped improve **the conservation of 25 threatened species, including 12 mammals** (pangolin, humpback whale, manatee, gorilla, giraffe, hippopotamus, lemur, etc.). It has supported **the creation of 508,103 hectares of community protected areas** and supported around 20 pro-biodiversity sectors (beekeeping, handicrafts, fish farming, livestock, agroforestry, market gardening, rice farming, wild silk, cloves, cashew nuts, shea butter, wild mango, etc.).

How do you capitalise on these results?

P.E.: One of the pillars of the PPI is providing networking opportunities for CSOs, through events or exchange visits. This fosters **the sharing of experiences and good practices, as well as the pooling of tools and skills, synergies and partnerships**. All this helps to strengthen their capacities and therefore their actions.

N.R.: Because they are in the field, CSOs are the most legitimate to advocate for environmental protection in Africa. Networking also helps to strengthen **their influence at national and international levels**. My assessment is a positive one. That is why, 10 years ago, the FFEM launched a similar programme in North Africa (PPI OSCAN), in partnership with IUCN Mediterranean.

The sixth phase of the PPI is nearing completion. What are the objectives for the seventh?

N.R.: The direction of PPI 7 is still under discussion. We aim to increase the impact of the projects funded. The geographical scope of the programme could be opened to a few additional countries. We could also increase the part of the programme dedicated to organisational development and CSO structuring, to further encourage scaling up of solutions. Examples such as the Senegalese association Nébéday encourage us in this, as support from the PPI and the results obtained in this context gave it access to direct FFEM funding.

STRUCTURE OF THE FFEM

**The three governance bodies of the FFEM interact
from the strategy formulation stage and throughout the project cycle.**



**MINISTRY OF ECONOMY,
FINANCE AND INDUSTRIAL
AND DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY**
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF THE TREASURY

Shanti Bobin

Chair of the Steering Committee,
Deputy Director of Multilateral Financial Affairs
and Development

Antoine Bergerot: Head of the Multilateral
Development and Climate Finance Office

Agathe Brécheteau: Deputy Head of the
Multilateral Development and Climate
Finance Office



**MINISTRY FOR EUROPE
AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS**
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Marine Collignon

Deputy Director for Environment
and Climate

Louise Rousseau: Head of EPAT Division

Alice Pauthier: Climate and Environment
Finance Policy Adviser



**MINISTRY FOR ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION,
BIODIVERSITY, FORESTS, MARINE AFFAIRS
AND FISHERIES**
DIRECTORATE FOR EUROPEAN
AND INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Anne Junius

Deputy Director for Strategy, Partnerships and
General Affairs

Benjamin Fouchard: Head of the
Partnerships, Operators, Projects Office

Zénaïde Hubert: Deputy Head
of the Partnerships, Operators,
Projects Office



**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
AND RESEARCH**
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION

Anne Puech

Director of the Environment, Agronomy,
Ecology, Earth and Universe Systems
Sciences Department

Jean Albergel: Policy Officer

Decision-making body

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

This committee brings
together the six member
institutions of the FFEM.
It decides on the general
policy pursued by the FFEM
and allocates project funding
following consultation with
the Scientific and Technical
Committee and Secretariat.



**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
AND FORESTS**

Françoise Simon

Deputy Director for International Affairs,
Europe and International Department

Lucas Blanchard Sultan: Policy Officer,
Environment/SD/Climate



**AFD
(FRENCH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY)**

Rima Le Coguic

Deputy Executive Director, Innovation, Strategy
and Research

Serge Snrech: Deputy, Climate and Nature
Division



Sébastien Treyer

Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee, Director General of IDDRI



Nathalie Gontard

Director of Research, Circular Economy and Plastic Pollution, INRAE



Stéphanie Capdeville

Independent expert in sustainable finance



Olivier Laroussinie

Deputy Director, Maritime Planning and Major Projects, Cerema

Advisory body

THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

This committee provides the inspiration for strategic guidelines, assures the relevance of projects funded and contributes to project monitoring and evaluation.



Maya Leroy

Teacher-researcher in natural resource management, AgroParisTech



Doyle McKey

Professor of Ecology, University of Montpellier II



François Moisan

European project manager, LEAP RE Former Scientific Director, ADEME



Luc Raimbault

Urban planner-engineer, Director of International Relations, Cergy-Pontoise



Chedly Rais

Environmentalist and evaluator



Mélanie Requier-Desjardins

Teacher-researcher in socio-economics of desertification, CIHEAM-IAMM



Anjali Shanker

Director General, IED

Operational body

THE SECRETARIAT*

Contributes to every stage of the project cycle, from appraisal to monitoring, implementation, capitalisation and communication.



Stéphanie Bouziges-Eschmann

Secretary General



Maëlis Borghese

Head of Evaluation-Capitalisation, supervision of the active portfolio



Nicolas Rossin
"Biodiversity" Project Manager



Janique Étienne
"Ocean nature-based solutions" Project Manager



Diane Menard
"Pollutants Circular economy Ozone" Project Manager



Emmanuelle Poirier-Magona
"Sustainable agriculture" Project Manager



Xavier Debaude
"Forests and ecosystem restoration" Project Manager



Aurélie Ghuelde
"Cities and Territories Pro-Climate & Nature" Project Manager



Séverine Barde-Carlier
Communications Manager



Elisabeth Coulibaly
Communications Assistant



Oumeyma Blaich
KYC due diligence, disbursement requests



Philippe Humbert-Droz
KYC due diligence, disbursement requests



Laurence Alligbonnon
Legal management and Montreal Protocol



Diane Ngo
Budget management



Carine Perillier
Cross-cutting administrative management

Activity summary

Projects undertaken in 2023-2024

BIODIVERSITY			PROJECT COMMITMENT DATE	FFEM GRANT (€)	TOTAL PROJECT COST (€)	SUPPORT INSTITUTION(S)
AFRICA	SMILO+	Sustainable small islands: SMILO initiative rolled out	26/06/2023	1,000,000	3,300,000	AFD-MIN. ENV.
AFRICA	Former pr conserver	Improving nature conservation in Africa through training and information	13/07/2023	1,400,000	2,830,000	MIN.ENV.
AFRICA	RESSOURCE+	Building expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their sustainable use for communities and their environment	10/11/2023	1,700,000	5,719,117	MIN.ENV.
AFRICA	Equité 3	Equité cacao in West Africa	20/12/2024	3,000,000	6,500,000	AFD
SENEGAL	RESCO-SALOUM	Conservation and development of marine and coastal resources in the Saloum Delta	09/10/2023	1,300,000	2,600,000	MIN.ENV.
MEDITERRANEAN	CAIPIM	Knowing, Acting, Innovating and Protecting the Small Mediterranean Islands	17/07/2024	1,492,495	3,072,295	MIN.ENV.
GUATEMALA	ConForMa	CONcerted FORest MAnagement for the future (ConForMa)	20/12/2024	2,140,000	5,339,151	MIN.ENV.
CARIBBEAN	Mangroves OECO	Mangrove restoration and conservation in the Eastern Caribbean	23/07/2024	2,500,000	5,500,000	AFD
CAMBODIA	SVAY CHEK	Managing the Svay Chek watershed with Nature-based Solutions (NbS)	19/12/2024	2,000,000	90,000,000	AFD
PHILIPPINES	Sea Academy Taytay	Sea Academy – Taytay Bay	16/12/2024	1,292,500	2,595,050	MIN.ENV.
EUROPE	PONT Connect	Improving ecosystem connectivity in corridors linking transboundary protected areas along the green belt in Albania and North Macedonia	17/12/2024	2,000,000	5,330,000	MIN.ENV.
TOTALS				19,824,995	132,785,613	

CLIMATE CHANGE			PROJECT COMMITMENT DATE	FFEM GRANT (€)	TOTAL PROJECT COST (€)	SUPPORT INSTITUTION(S)
AFRICA	ACACIAS	Accelerating climate change adaptation in the Sahel through eco-construction incentives combined with mechanisms for carbon credit trading	31/03/2023	850,000	1,702,000	MIN.ENV.
AFRICA	Qotto	Solar-powered refrigerators in the heart of sub-Saharan Africa	31/03/2023	834,970	2,793,222	-
AFRICA	PEEB Cool	Programme for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (PEEB) Cool	21/12/2023	3,000,000	1,341,500,000	AFD
AFRICA	ARRICE	Africa Regional Resilience Initiative on Climate Education	19/12/2024	1,479,188	2,870,000	MIN.ENV.-MIN.RECH.
MADAGASCAR	TOTEM	Territoires en Transition Ecologique à Madagascar (TOTEM)	05/04/2024	1,566,000	3,193,000	MIN.ENV.
LATIN AMERICA	RÉSERVES VITALES	Our Future Forests: Vital Reserves in Amazonia	20/06/2023	2,500,000	15,500,000	MIN.ECO.
CUBA	RESILIENCE BLEUE	Resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems at pilot sites in the Guanahacabibes peninsula and Playa Santa Lucia	22/12/2023	1,600,000	4,725,550	AFD-MIN. ENV.
TOTALS				11,830,158	1,372,283,772	

LAND DEGRADATION & POLLUTANTS

			PROJECT COMMITMENT DATE	FFEM GRANT (€)	TOTAL PROJECT COST (€)	SUPPORT INSTITUTION(S)
NAMIBIA	OBPS	Savannah rehabilitation, environmental and social management of a biomass supply chain for a bioelectricity plant	15/12/2023	2,999,600	133,777,126	AFD
SENEGAL	DUNDI FERLO	Reforestation in the Ferlo region for sustainable management of pastoral lands	31/03/2023	1,200,000	2,389,131	AFD
MEDITERRANEAN	BeMed+	Beyond Plastic Med, committing to a plastic-free Mediterranean	20/06/2023	1,845,759	6,190,170	MIN.ENV.
TOTALS				6,045,359	142,356,427	

2023-2024 Performance Report

	NUMBER OF PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN	AMOUNT OF PROJECT FUNDING COMMITTED BY THE FFEM IN €	% OF FFEM TOTAL COMMITTED	TOTAL COST OF PROJECTS IN €
BY TYPE				
Biodiversity	11	19,824,995	53%	132,785,613
Climate change	7	11,830,158	31%	1,372,283,772
POP - Land degradation	3	6,045,359	16%	142,356,427
TOTAL	21	37,700,512	100%	1,647,425,812
BY REGION				
Africa	12	20,329,758	54%	1,509,173,596
Mediterranean	2	3,338,254	9%	9,262,465
Latin America	4	8,740,000	23%	31,064,701
Asia-Pacific	2	3,292,500	9%	92,595,050
Europe	1	2,000,000	5%	5,330,000
TOTAL	21	37,700,512	100%	1,647,425,812
BY PRIORITY THEME				
Energy transition and resilient cities	5	7,730,158	20%	1,352,058,222
Protection and promotion of biodiversity	6	8,884,995	24%	22,846,462
Forestry and agricultural land sustainability	6	13,839,600	37%	253,505,408
Aquatic ecosystem resilience	3	5,400,000	14%	12,825,550
Product life cycle, pollution and waste	1	1,845,759	5%	6,190,170
TOTAL	21	37,700,512	100%	1 647 425 812
	NUMBER OF PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN	AMOUNT OF PROJECT FUNDING COMMITTED BY THE FFEM IN €	% OF FFEM TOTAL COMMITTED	TOTAL COST OF PROJECTS IN €
ONGOING PROJECTS (at 31/12/2024)				
Biodiversity	34	58,067,666	41	320,237,520
Climate change	39	64,572,440	51	1,646,818,877
International waters	9	16,568,222	38	112,918,423
POP - Land degradation	15	23,123,870	50	256,247,942
TOTAL	97	162 332 198	46	2,336,222,762
FFEM OPERATING COSTS (€)				
Feasibility, appraisal and monitoring during project execution and support for project initiators		2,920,774		3,380,293
Communication, experience exchange, representation and other expenses		833,545		754,441
Project evaluation and capitalisation		855,379		754,141
TOTAL		4,609,698		4,888,875

Member institutions of the ffem steering committee

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139, rue de Bercy
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