



Global Conservation Fund

The Global Conservation Fund (GCF) finances the creation, expansion and long-term management of protected areas.

Protected areas are a vital part of efforts to ensure a healthy planet. Millions of communities rely on their abundant species and diverse landscapes for their daily sustenance, including clean air, fresh water and food. Protected areas also play an important role in combating global climate change, the greatest threat to the long-term health of the Earth and all the life it sustains.

GCF has enabled CI field programs and more than 40 partners to ensure protection for more than 79 million hectares (197 million acres) of the most threatened and biologically important land and seascapes. From the tropical forests of Central America to the marine wilderness areas of the South Pacific, GCF investments have helped protect vast, critical areas – a living legacy providing benefits today and for generations to come.

Strategy

Made possible by a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, GCF provides financial and strategic assistance to enable local communities, nongovernmental organizations, and governments to protect their biological riches.

GCF is the first global fund designed to target two critical needs: creating and expanding protected areas, and ensuring effective management of those areas for the long term.

The goal for all GCF projects is a newly created or expanded protected area supported by a financing strategy and well-capitalized mechanism to cover management costs in the future.

The global fund:

- Makes investment decisions based on sound science to benefit the highest priority places for conservation through the creation or expansion of protected areas.
- Supports long-term management of protected areas to ensure effective and lasting protection.
- Mobilizes additional financial resources to multiply and sustain results.

GCF supports a wide range of approaches to create and expand protected areas, from national parks decreed by governments to privately owned lands to community-managed reserves that combine conservation with responsible natural resource use and development.

The GCF focus on ensuring effective management for the long term is both unique and vital. Many protected areas, once created, lack sufficient funding to be effective. GCF helps design and support endowments, trusts and other special mechanisms

that create a steady flow of funds for managing important new protected areas into the future.

Results

GCF support has enabled the creation of 63 new protected areas and expansion of six existing protected areas in 25 countries – an amount projected to nearly double in the future through dozens of initiatives currently receiving GCF support. GCF investments also have helped make possible a number of ground-breaking agreements and financial mechanisms to support protected areas in the long term.

Highlights of the 79 million hectares protected to date include:

- 402,000 hectares protected in Cambodia's Cardamom Mountains, bringing the land under protection in the area to 987,000 hectares and forming the largest, most pristine wilderness in mainland Southeast Asia. The Cardamoms provide habitat for tigers and most of Cambodia's other large mammals, as well as for half of its birds, reptiles and amphibians. They also protect five major rivers that collectively feed the rice fields and fishing grounds of surrounding communities. A special fund is now being developed to support management costs for this critical area in the long term.
- An agreement between CI, The Nature Conservancy and the governments of the United States and Guatemala that will provide more than \$24 million to help protect critically threatened tropical forests in the Central American country over 15 years. This debt-for-nature swap will help conserve some of Guatemala's most important natural heritage, including high-altitude cloud forests, tropical rain forests and coastal mangroves that are home to many threatened species and are important for local and national economic development in terms of water production, forestry and tourism.

The protected areas supported by GCF provide vital habitat for more than 700 globally threatened species. Benefits also extend beyond the immediate impact on the area's biodiversity as human health is strongly linked to the health of ecosystems. A World Bank study of all Madagascar's national parks showed that the \$94 million spent on these parks paid for itself, plus provided 875,000 rural rice-farming households with water – a benefit worth up to \$119 million.

The healthy natural ecosystems, both on land and in the oceans, being made possible with GCF support also play an important role in mitigating and adapting to global climate change. Tropical forests actively remove and store atmospheric carbon dioxide. When destroyed, however, they release and emit their stored carbon into the atmosphere, along with carbon from the soil below them. Tropical deforestation accounts for more than 20 percent of total carbon dioxide emissions, which is more than all the world's cars, trucks, trains and airplanes combined. Many GCF projects focus on forest areas as a critical part of the solution to combating global climate change.

OUR VISION

We imagine a healthy prosperous world in which societies are forever committed to caring for and valuing nature for the long-term benefit of people and all life on Earth.

OUR MISSION

Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, CI empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature for the well-being of humanity.



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