



PRESS RELEASE

Austria provides over 2 million dollars in support of the CBD LifeWeb Initiative

Montreal, 31 October 2013 – The Government of Austria has approved a funding package worth US\$2.2 million through the LifeWeb Initiative to help implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in four countries.

The projects to be supported, in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and others, range from rehabilitation of a biosphere reserve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the protection of river dolphins in the Sundarbans, the enlargement of protected area systems in Laos and the restoration of habitats where species of wild coffee reside in Ethiopia.

Austria joins the governments of Germany and Finland, the European Commission and other donor countries and international foundations in making strategic investments that assist developing countries to achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as agreed in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said: “The funding provided by Austria is a generous contribution to the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, through the LifeWeb Initiative. It builds the network of partnerships, with organisations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, which we need for implementation. We look forward to further collaboration with Austria and call upon other donors to make their pledges in support of the CBD.”

Cristián Samper, President and CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society, said: “The CBD LifeWeb Initiative is an invaluable facilitator to bring much-needed funds to the front lines of biodiversity conservation work around the world. We are very thankful to the Government of Austria for their generous support so this crucial work can continue.”

Projects funded by the contribution are as follows:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: Rehabilitation of the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve. US\$585,000 to conduct baseline biodiversity assessments, develop stronger management planning that involves local communities and build the capacity of ranger patrols. Yangambi Biosphere Reserve is very important from a biodiversity perspective as it harbours 32,000 species of trees and provides habitat for Bonobo monkeys, Okapi and the Nile Crocodile.
- Lao People's Democratic Republic: Strengthening and enlarging the Protected Area System of Eastern Bolikhamxay Province - US\$685,000. This WCS project will strengthen community outreach efforts and anti-poaching control in eastern Bolikhamxay linking three conservation forests including Phou Chom Voy PPA, Phou Sithone ESCA, and Nam Kading National Protected Area.



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- Bangladesh: Protection of threatened river dolphins in Sundarbans Mangrove Forest - US\$431,000. This WCS project aims to conserve Ganges River dolphin, at imminent risk of extinction and Irrawaddy dolphins, highly threatened due to numerous activities by humans, through the establishment of a protected area network in waterways of the Sundarbans mangrove forest.
- Ethiopia: Protection of wild coffee species and protection and restoration of the Yayu forest where they reside - US\$500,000. This project will protect the genetic diversity of wild coffee varieties in western Ethiopia through forest protection, restoration of degraded lands and promotion and marketing of forest coffee products.

Notes to Editors

The LifeWeb Initiative of the Convention on Biological Diversity is a facilitator of financing for biodiversity conservation projects in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It adds value to international development cooperation partners by providing a user-friendly clearing-house of financial priorities, facilitating funding matches, helping leverage counterpart funding and recognizing support provided. lifeweb.cbd.int

The Wildlife Conservation Society saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, global conservation, education and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in harmony. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth. www.wcs.org

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 166 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal. For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

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