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MEMORIES OF  
**MAVA**



**I**n the final year before its closure, MAVA asked its partners and fellow funders to submit stories about their collaboration as part of a project called MAVA Memories. An organisation called Voices That Count guided MAVA in the process and developed the tools to facilitate the story collection.

Over the first half of 2022, partners shared personal stories, amusing anecdotes, expressions of gratitude and photographs. A small selection of these stories and images appear in this chapter to paint a picture of how partners perceive MAVA's legacy and its far-reaching impact, filling in the finer details of the larger-scale impact described in the previous chapter's success stories.

These memories are divided into six categories according to their prevalent theme. We start with stories describing times MAVA's involvement dramatically overhauled the trajectory of a project, followed by stories about the foundation's willingness to take risks. The next group covers MAVA's commitment to strengthening the conservation community, then come accounts of its efforts to raise awareness and deepen knowledge. We next find stories of the foundation's work to empower individuals and, finally, a selection of memories from MAVA's peer funders describing their experiences together.

These stories from MAVA partners form a powerful statement of the impact the foundation has had and the legacy it leaves behind.



**Right:** An Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) and vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) at a vulture feeding site in Dadia National Park, Greece.







## LIGHTING A BEACON OF HOPE FOR VULNERABLE SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS

*The transformative impact of MAVA's funding on particular species, protected areas or ecosystems was a frequent theme of the stories, with a predictable focus on freshwater habitats and wetlands – the field of conservation where the foundation's legacy is strongest. Many of the stories in this section illustrate the foundation's commitment to helping its partners engage local communities and integrate traditional cultural practices in their conservation activities.*

*From weasels to monk seals, Montenegro to Morocco, the breadth of creatures and places included in this small snapshot show how the foundation championed overlooked species and locations alongside emblematic animals and its iconic sites, becoming known for funding lesser-known causes.*





### Artisanal fishermen for ocean conservation

In November 2002, the M-100 fuel oil transported by the Prestige sank off the coast of Galicia. It was the beginning of an enormous tragedy, an oil slick that would close the fishing grounds for a year, kill marine life and mobilise society as a whole. A team from WWF Spain immediately set up an office on the ground. The fishing sector, especially the artisanal sector, saw an external threat materialise in the form of tar, destroying the habitats exploited

by their ancestors and the local fishing market. We understood the fragility of the ocean and the need to protect and restore it.

Some fishermen, such as those from the village of Lira, turned their concerns and deliberations into action, promoting the co-managed Marine Reserve of Fishing Interest of Os Miñarzos (2007). They sought the support of science and civil society, inviting WWF Spain among others to participate. Two integral reserves were created, more restrictive measures were established,

increasing minimum sizes, reducing quotas and extending closed seasons, and surveillance and monitoring were reinforced. This worked, fishing resources improved spectacularly, poaching fell and commercialisation improved; more than 90% of the users were satisfied. A silent revolution in artisanal fishing was beginning that would reach the whole country. We wanted to support those fishermen willing to undertake their own ecological transition: participation as an engine of change.

But who would bet on such an ambitious and complex initiative? Well, MAVA, who else? Its support since 2012 has enabled us to bring in other relevant partners, to train 100 fishermen, researchers and managers, to support local initiatives for change by co-financing dozens of projects, and to weave a network of initiatives towards sustainability throughout the territory. Hundreds of fishermen from dozens of countries have learned and been inspired by visiting Spanish ports, or participating in virtual meetings, in many cases launching similar initiatives.

Changing the legislative framework from below, counting on people and science, taking co-responsibility for the common good. Therein lies the legacy of MAVA, instrumental and alive, benefiting millions of people through the conservation of nature and the implementation of sustainability models.

**Raúl García Rodríguez,**  
WWF Spain

### Saving Bosnia and Herzegovina's precious natural heritage

It was 2006. For a number of years, Hutovo Blato Nature Park in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been collapsing. The Nature Park authorities could not afford ranger services, poaching was drastically increasing, the wetlands were drying away because of water diversion for hydropower, there were no visitors, and everybody was giving up. I resignedly explained the situation to people that I had just met from

the WWF Mediterranean Programme Office. They told me about MAVA, and that they can secure funds to save Hutovo Blato. I thought that was just another polite person with empty promises. But we have made it. We saved Hutovo Blato and MAVA made it happen. Only MAVA had the courage to support us in opposing mighty energy companies; only MAVA had the patience to support us in endless negotiations with the governments; and only MAVA believed in us when promising that Hutovo Blato could become

self-sustainable by investing in the capacity-building of the Park authorities. Today, we have multi-million euro investments in sustainable tourism, as well as in the wetlands restoration coming from EU funds. There is no poaching and local people recognise and support the Park authorities. What seemed impossible 15 years ago, we now have in place.

Thank you, MAVA!

**Zoran Mateljak,**  
WWF Adria





## Rebuilding the West African mangrove ecosystem

Who said that mangroves were one of the ecosystems where man had the least chance of survival? Perhaps this person did not know the mangrove system of West Africa, which borders the rivers of the south with its long, protective and generous green sheet! Especially since in West Africa it is the mangrove that has suffered from human activity during the 20th century, as well as the species and economies that depend on it.

In 2022, we now look forward to seeing West Africa's mangroves

restored, providing a haven for life and an adaptation tool for coastal communities.

What has MAVA achieved in this regard? In my successive vigils at the organisations FIBA, PRCM, IUCN and RAMP AO, I saw MAVA relentlessly support West African actors to activate the multiple levers of change: regional policies, public policies, scientific research, training of researchers and technicians, creation and management of marine protected areas, involvement of civil society, exchange of experiences and mutual learning, environmental education... An emblematic figure of good news in marine conservation, the mangrove

illustrates the patient support work carried out by the foundation, embroidered with empathy and high standards, guided by a constant desire to share, and a regularly updated strategic reflection. The West African coastal actors who are directly or indirectly heirs to the work of MAVA are truly numerous, better prepared for future challenges, more united within the PRCM, and supported by new partners. From the bottom of my heart, bravo and thank you.

**Mathieu Ducrocq,**  
Réseau Régional d'Aires  
Marines Protégées en Afrique  
de l'Ouest (RAMP AO)



## Saving the Alpine rivers

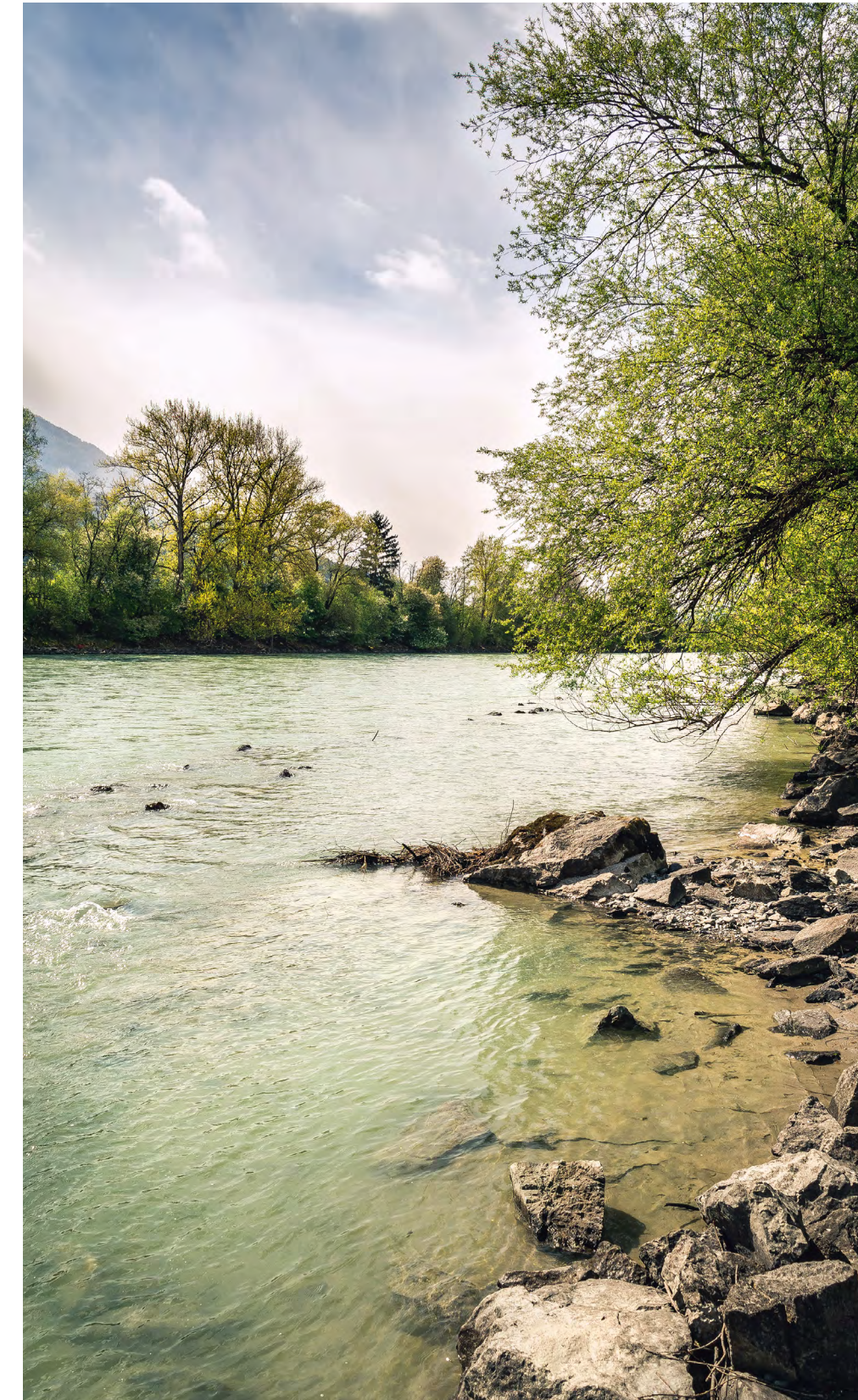
If the MAVA Foundation had not existed, many Alpine rivers would undoubtedly be in a poorer condition. For 10 years, WWF Austria and its partner organisations were able to implement a comprehensive programme for the protection and conservation of torrents, rivers and floodplains in the Alpine region. Rivers like the Inn, the Ötztaler Ache and the Lech were saved from harmful interventions such as constructions of destructive hydroelectric power plants. In addition, obstructed river stretches were revitalised. Environmental education and wide-ranging PR activities also achieved remarkable results.

We succeeded in raising awareness of the importance of rivers as lifelines among the population and decision-makers, and to fight for large-scale river protection areas. Holger Schmid, our professional and benevolent advisor, did not only make the generous support possible, but contributed also on a technical and strategic level. With every drop of free-flowing water that runs naturally and undammed downstream, the priceless river habitats of the Alps are preserved for nature and society. The Alpine waters thank the MAVA Foundation team for making this possible!

**Christoph Walder,**  
WWF Austria



Right: Lech river, Tyrol, Austria.





# Hand-in-hand conservation of nature and traditional cultures in Spain

In 1992, we initiated an ambitious project to recover the transhumance of livestock walking between the south and north of Spain along cattle trails that had been abandoned for almost a century. It was also an adaptation to climate change and to ensure the sustainability of ecosystems. Since October 1994, the passage of one of our herds every autumn through the centre of Madrid has made the importance of pastoral, nomadic and transhumant cultures visible worldwide. The approval by the Spanish Parliament in March 1995 of the new Law on Livestock Trails, which upheld the protection of a 125,000 km network of drovers' roads created in the 13th century, allowed many families to resume walking between the north and south of the peninsula, with many environmental, social and economic benefits.

Dr Luc Hoffmann supported this initiative from the beginning, and in 1999 he made a generous

donation for the purchase of 1,200 transhumant sheep and goats. This flock grazed during the winter in the pastures of the Biosphere Reserve of Monfragüe, then travelled 500km over a month to the National Park of Picos de Europa to graze during the summer in the mountains of León, bordering Asturias and Cantabria.

During the last 30 years, we have supported a total of 50 livestock families who wished to recover transhumance with their herds, travelling with them

some 130,000km of cattle trails with more than half a million sheep, goats, cows and horses. The support of Dr Luc Hoffmann and his foundation MAVA in the conservation of nature and traditional cultures in Spain and the Mediterranean Basin is a worldwide example of generous philanthropy whose promising results will hopefully endure in the future of our planet.

**Jesús Garzón,**  
**Associação Transumância e Natureza (ATN)**



**Top right:** Jesús Garzón in the Guadarrama mountains, Segovia, Spain, 5 June 2020; **Bottom right:** Luc Hoffmann taking part in the transhumance of livestock walking between the South and North of Spain (Salamanca, June 2000). The flock of 1,200 goats and sheep grazed in the pastures of the Biosphere Reserve of Monfragüe in the winter, then travelled 500 km to the National Park of Picos de Europa to graze during the summer.



# The fight to save Salina

We have been working for the protection of Ulcinj Salina, Montenegro, for more than 15 years, all the way and time supported by MAVA. We have achieved our main goal of the site's formal legal protection but it still lacks proper management and concrete action on its restoration. Each year, during this battle against a massive construction project (planned hotels, golf terrains and marina) we had witnessed flamingos creating their nests and unfortunately failing at it (due to poor water management and destroyed infrastructure). Seeing them building their nests again and again so effortlessly, not giving up against all odds just gave us so much hope: never to give up, to constantly dust ourselves off and try again.

# The butterfly effect

Our story began in 2018 with the creation of our office, thanks to the unfailing support of the MAVA Foundation. Our team was brought together by the love of nature and by the commitment to the protection and restoration of the natural ecosystems of our country.

Together, we have overcome many challenges. We conquered the field. We learned by doing. MAVA allowed us with benevolence and patience to try, fail, try again, find the right solutions adapted to our context, and finally succeed.

A few years ago, we were four people standing in the middle of the dry lake Dayet Aoua,



Flamingos are still not successfully nesting but we ensured sanctuary for many endangered bird species. Today Salina is one of the closing benchmarks of Montenegro's EU accession process and it is formally protected

and safe from construction. The rest is still to come!

**Jovana Janjušević,**  
**Center for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP),**  
**Montenegro**

accompanied by the local population and surrounded by a desolate landscape. We dreamed that we would one day be able to change things and bring this iconic wetland in Morocco back to life. At that time, it was almost impossible to openly discuss the real causes of this situation and to bring together public institutions and the local population around a common project to restore Lake Dayet Aoua. Our small team didn't look like much and we heard the phrase "too ambitious" several times.

After four years of effort, we succeeded in classifying this lake as a Ramsar site and in bringing together and mobilising all the stakeholders in a participatory approach. The

government, NGOs and local population worked together to debate, share knowledge and produce the lake Dayet Aoua restoration plan.

The MAVA Foundation has changed our lives, as well as those of thousands of beneficiaries in the harsh mountains of the Middle Atlas, and breathed a wind of hope that will continue to green the hard years ahead.

We will be the guardians of this promise, we will be the legacy of MAVA.

**Yousra Madani,**  
**Living Planet Morocco**





## Protecting small carnivores

The small carnivores were one of the very few animal groups which had no “lobby” in Switzerland until 2007 and whose conservation and systematic promotion was not an issue. For this reason, following the initiative of some wildlife biologists and thanks to the financial support of the MAVA Foundation, the organisation WIN Wieselnetz, or WIN Weasel Network, was created, which was transformed into the legal form of a foundation in 2012.

From 2012 to 2017, WIN Wieselnetz carried out the large-scale project Weasel Landscape Switzerland, which was co-financed by the MAVA Foundation. Within this framework, the cultural landscape

was enhanced and a network created with 12 regional meadow promotion projects, which were located in a series from the east to the west of Switzerland.

Today, nature conservation organisations, cantonal agencies for nature and landscape conservation, foresters, agricultural schools, agricultural advisors, farmers and airfield and golf course wardens contact WIN Wieselnetz for expert advice on the conservation and promotion of weasels and other small mammals.

**Cristina Boschi,**  
**WIN Wieselnetz**

## The Noah's Ark of Mediterranean fauna

The Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre is developing a conservation programme for the whole of the western Iberian Peninsula through the creation of different biological reserves and the signing of land stewardship agreements. Perhaps the most emblematic area is the Campanarios de Azaba Biological Reserve, in the valley of Azaba, Salamanca, Spain. We met MAVA when all this was just a dream and now, thanks to them, it has become a sanctuary for wildlife.

It was around 2008 when I was at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, being at that time the President of the Spanish Committee, with a portfolio full of youth, enthusiasm, dreams and projects to be fulfilled. I had been told that Luc Hoffmann had attended the Congress. I was startled, it was my chance to meet one of the people I have most admired. After his speech, I approached his director and dear friend Jean-Paul Taris who facilitated our meeting at his hotel. Our meeting was supposed to last 20 minutes, but it lasted more than an hour and a half, during which we shared the dream of transforming a 600-hectare area

of over-exploited agricultural land into a Noah's Ark for biodiversity.

From there we started working with MAVA, whose team I regard as very special because of the way they relate to the entities they collaborate with. Someone to call when a problem arises, always ready to offer the best advice, building trust, listening, helping... and also to meet André and the Hoffmann family, with whom I had the pleasure of spending several days at the Reserve. I remember with special affection the evenings of get-togethers and music, always marked by the joy shared with our work teams.

Thanks to MAVA, the Campanarios de Azaba Biological Reserve has come to life. Almost 15 years

have passed since that meeting which marked my personal and professional life.

Together, we have brought nature back to life in all its splendour: a veritable Noah's Ark for the Iberian Mediterranean fauna. European pond turtles have grown from 100 to 200, ponds and lagoons are now clear and home to more than 25 species of dragonflies and odonates, as well as a rich community of amphibians. The flora of the forests, pastures and ponds have increased; the soils are not ploughed and reptiles and beetles are now also abundant and can fulfil their invaluable function of enriching the soil.

**Carlos Sánchez Martínez,**  
**Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre**



Right: Campanarios de Azaba Biological Reserve, Valley of Azaba, Salamanca, Spain.







# CATALYSING IDEAS FROM PROMISE TO PROGRESS

*Another recurring topic in the stories was MAVA’s willingness to take risks on innovative new concepts or projects where it saw potential. In practice, this ranged from funding new ideas or out-of-the-box approaches for individual organisations to scaling promising pilots and forging fresh coalitions, for example with the private sector. Its readiness to think big and bold with funding and scale of action helped to multiply partners’ impact.*

*The foundation was often the first funder to come on board for new initiatives and its involvement tended to be seen as a mark of approval that eventually attracted other funders. It’s clear from the stories in this section that this early support laid the groundwork for many of MAVA’s partners to grow into credible, strong and sustainable organisations.*



Left: Ringing of flamingos, Fangassier pond, Camargue, France.



Championing the right to repair

Thanks to MAVA Foundation for supporting the work of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) on Circular Economy for all these years. There are many stories we could share, but let’s focus on Right to Repair.

We started by advocating to get material efficiency requirements under a specific policy called Ecodesign and targeting electric and electronic equipment. The policy focused nearly exclusively on energy efficiency, neglecting material savings. MAVA Foundation supported us from 2014 onward to make the case for material resource savings together with energy saving, notably as embodied energy and emissions in materials were becoming

more significant as energy use was optimised. After four years of perseverant advocacy with our partners from NGO and consumer organisations, we got repair requirements in several Ecodesign regulations and the start of the development of a repair scoring index.

We created a campaign called the Right to Repair EU, getting inspiration from our US friends. In 2020, a Circular Economy Action Plan was released highlighting the development of a specific Right to Repair policy, while at the same time the repair provisions continued to be implemented through Ecodesign policy for more product groups. In the meantime, the Right to Repair campaign gained many new members and was awarded the Good Lobby Award.

Today, there are discussions about creating a repair label for energy products, exploring repair in other sectors like furniture and textiles, and making repair part of the necessary information on products placed on the market through Digital Product Passport. We cannot imagine that this would have ever happened without MAVA’s support, but we are confident we have now matured the campaign to get recognition and support from other donors, active members and sponsors. We are now considering how to expand beyond the EU and US towards the global level.

**Stéphane Arditi and Jean-Pierre Schweitzer,**  
European Environmental Bureau

Devising sustainable funding for the oceans

The MAVA Foundation was absolutely instrumental when the Marine Stewardship Council was trying to launch our new Ocean Stewardship Fund in 2020/21. They had already helped us pilot a project in western Africa to look at alternative financing for small-scale fisheries that typically have problems accessing traditional financing. With help from our partner in the project, Clarmondial, we decided to use our Ocean Stewardship Fund (OSF) to solve this problem.

MAVA was completely supportive of the idea and then even became the first major funder other than ourselves. Now we’re able to support small-scale fisheries, NGOs and research institutions across the Mediterranean and western Africa that otherwise wouldn’t be able to do their work protecting the biodiversity of these areas – and the impact will be transformative for years to come. And thanks to their support, we’ve been able to leverage significant additional outside financial support for the OSF to complement our own annual contributions – thus ensuring that support for

this work will be sustainable in the long-term. We’re both proud and grateful for all that MAVA has done for our work and for the sustainability of our oceans!

**Paul Houseman,**  
Marine Stewardship Council

Fresh approaches to longstanding challenges

When we speak of MAVA, we speak of being supportive, we speak of dedication and devotion, a devotion to saving the world’s conservation sector.

MAVA also contributed to many changes in my community. An important change that definitely influenced the community of Boa Vista and Cape Verde at a national level was when MAVA explored new methods of beach protection, including night vision drones and conservation dogs, to keep poachers away from nesting turtles.

About 70 night missions and about 400 single drone flights per nesting season were carried out.

About half of these missions were accompanied by policemen who were ready to intervene and arrest perpetrators in case poaching activity was detected. The number of recorded poaching cases dropped from 235 in 2017 to 70 in 2018 and further to 19 in 2019.

The conservation dog project started when we purchased two Labrador puppies in Switzerland in 2017. We named the two dogs (male and female) in reference to the scientific names of the two species of turtles found mainly in Cape Verde: Karetta (*Caretta caretta*, the loggerhead turtle) and Kelo (*Chelonia mydas*, the green turtle).

The two puppies received their basic training, as did the Cape Verdean rangers who would handle

them. In June 2019, Karetta and Kelo came to Boa Vista. The dogs’ main task is to track down parts of poached turtles, which will later be expanded to detect turtle meat, for example at airports, ports, and on boats.

I think the hope this story brings for future conservation workers is that thinking outside the box and always trying to find new solutions for problems will lead to success.

**Ukie Resende,**  
Fundação Tartaruga



Below: Two rangers (Carlos Monteiro, front, and Emilio Landim, back) and their dogs tracking poached sea turtles in Boa Vista, Cape Verde.





## A supportive and challenging companion

While we were busy building WWF Mediterranean, thanks to MAVA's flexible programmatic funding we could launch into innovative, audacious and even risky new conservation strategies. We targeted the powerful hydropower industry in the Balkans; we stepped into the offices of North Africa governments' water departments to promote the unheard-of concept of ecosystem-based river basin management; we shook the power structures around fisheries by promoting co-management and bringing small-scale fisherpeople and coastal communities into the spotlight;

we changed the governments' and communities' perception of wetlands from wastelands to assets. None of this we did alone: MAVA's support helped us build larger and more powerful alliances, coalitions and partnerships.

Now that I am approaching retirement age, I can see that MAVA was a companion for a large part of my journey. It wasn't all plain sailing! As should be expected from a donor that contributed so much to WWF Mediterranean's strategy, MAVA was often challenging, sometimes critical. Most of the time it was very flexible on strategy changes and budget reallocations; sometimes very demanding about aligning

with MAVA's strategic objectives, joining in large partnerships and demonstrating impact. I am not sure whether WWF lived up to all MAVA's expectations. I know that we did our best to meet them. As we did we do our best to prepare for the post-MAVA era.

WWF Mediterranean, WWF Adria, WWF North Africa and Associação Natureza Portugal (ANP)/WWF are all part of MAVA's legacy. These are organisations that we could build thanks to MAVA's support and that will continue carrying the conservation torch that MAVA lit and powered for a long time.

**Paolo Lombardi,**  
WWF Mediterranean



## Zero waste cities

At Zero Waste Europe we have been playing with the idea of a network of European zero waste municipalities for almost 15 years. We knew we could create significant change if we managed to develop the right tools and train local groups to follow up with their local authorities to commit to changing their resource management.

After lots of work from many people in our network, we managed to put together a proposal that interested MAVA, and since then the work has taken off big time. MAVA didn't only finance part of this project but also brought other funders to help cover what was needed. In total, local groups in 13 European countries started working to turn municipalities zero waste.

Three years later, we have managed to develop the most robust zero waste certification system for cities on the planet and the project is so successful that we struggle to keep up with the interest from new cities from across the continent. From Riga to Barcelona and from Ljubljana to Brussels, almost 500 municipalities of all sizes and geographies have embarked on the journey to reduce waste and preserve resources for future generations.

This would not have been possible if MAVA hadn't believed that, despite our crazy ambition, we had a plan to make it happen – and we did.

This is only one piece of support that MAVA provided to our organisation. Another key one has been the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy, in which eight people

from our team have participated. For all this, the MAVA legacy is enshrined in the history and hopefully the DNA of Zero Waste Europe. Thanks MAVA for believing in us!

**Joan Marc Simon,**  
Zero Waste Europe



Above: Zero Waste Europe's Network Gathering Meeting, June 2022. This meeting welcomed together representatives from 34 members across 27 countries, all working at the national level to implement zero waste policies.



### Supporting bird study and protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina

My first contact with the MAVA Foundation was in 2009, when I met the late Dr. Martin Schneider-Jacoby from EuroNatur (Germany) for the first time. He introduced me to the work of the MAVA Foundation and their willingness to support projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Over the past decade and a half, our Ornithological Society has had the support of MAVA for numerous projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly focused on fighting the illegal killing of birds, systematic surveys of karst poljes, and raising awareness about the importance of protection of birds and their habitats, as well as strengthening the capacities of our organisation through various workshops and training.

I personally had the most significant experience as a national coordinator for work on the second European Breeding Bird Atlas (EBBA2). The inclusion of our country in the EBBA2 project was of special importance because we had the opportunity for the first

time to collect data on breeding birds in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The complexities of working in the field, numerous gatherings and cooperation with colleagues from all over Europe presented a special challenge, and the support we received from the MAVA Foundation greatly strengthened our capacities.

For a small country like Bosnia and Herzegovina, MAVA was more than supportive – it was the ink to the fountain pen that wrote significant dates for ornithology in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Dražen Kotrošan,**  
**Ornithological Society**  
**“Naše ptice”**



Above: Great reed warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) singing amongst common reeds (*Phragmites australis*) in Hutovo Blato Nature Park, Bosnia and Herzegovina, May 2009; Right: Exchanges between Liesbeth Casier of IISD, Adam Ceesay of Wetlands International and Shalimar Sinno of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon during the first MAVA Academy gathering in July 2019 in Amman, Jordan.

### Taking risk and creating impact

MAVA has been a risk-taker and a first-mover, allowing for the creation of new avenues to impacts. MAVA was the first supporter of the Green Digital Finance Alliance (GDFA), a not-for-profit with the mandate to scale green finance with fintech and digital technologies. Digital technologies hold the potential to innovate the financial system in ways that empower every citizen to become green asset owners, something which is all too often only accessible to larger institutional investors. A transformation which will not happen automatically, but only

if it is guided. MAVA enabled the GDFA to become a market catalyst to unlock the change.

I had the experience of heading up the GDFA during its first years of operation. During these initial years, regulators, policy makers and financial service institutions were sceptical towards our mandate of leveraging digital technologies to green the financial system. We worked to document how it is possible to guide digital technologies to green the financial system in inclusive ways. After years of mapping innovations and proving potentials, now policymakers, regulators and financial institutions are themselves beginning to

experiment with green digital approaches to a greener and more inclusive financial system.

GDFA is now perceived as the go-to platform on insights and approaches to green digital finance. It is no longer a side story, but a respected market catalyst. Now more donors support the mission and vision of the GDFA, but to begin with MAVA was the only philanthropic funder who was willing to take risk in order to create new types of impacts.

**Marianne Haahr,**  
**Green Digital Finance Alliance**

### Being a believer, a catalyst and a supporter

A couple of years ago, we started a new workstream to develop tools and methods to make the case for investment in sustainable and nature-based infrastructure. This led to the development of the Sustainable Asset Valuation (SAVi) methodology. MAVA believed in

us to make that happen, but also asked us really difficult questions. It's thanks to that approach that we managed to deliver a very impactful tool and were able to roll it out in many countries and on many infrastructure projects.

MAVA kept believing in our work, in the innovation we wanted to bring into the sustainable infrastructure

space, and empowered us to make that happen. Not only did MAVA seed the funding for this new workstream at IISD, it also pushed for impact and scale, provided leadership training to our team through the Leaders for Nature Academy, and connected us to other MAVA grantees such as Wetlands International Africa, EcoAlbania, and WWF Greece, with whom we've been working since on applying SAVi to advocate for more sustainable and nature-based infrastructure. MAVA truly operated as a catalyst for our work, and helped us set up and prepare to be able to deliver impact for the years to come.

**Liesbeth Casier,**  
**International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)**







### Learning to love nature

In the early 2010s, we launched an ambitious capacity-building programme for protected area managers in West Africa, then Central Africa and from 2015 onwards, for the whole of Africa. Combining face-to-face and online training, this programme has been built step by step, as our understanding of the needs, targets, usable resources and partners has progressed. Several donors helped us, but for all this to work we needed flexibility to keep our capacity to adapt and reorient over time. This is what MAVA offered us, through three projects between 2011 and 2021. The first one allowed us to establish on-site training; the following ones consolidated it and opened the immense field of

online courses. Today, the Master's degree (seven classes) and the university diploma (19 classes) have become institutions (thanks to a solid partnership with Senghor University) and the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have reached nearly 100,000 learners, 85 per cent of whom are in Africa. The mooc-conservation.org platform continues to grow slowly to become the natural portal for online conservation training in Africa.

None of this would have been possible without MAVA's intelligent, scalable, adapted and flexible support, which has been able to evolve each of its projects according to new co-funding opportunities or, on the contrary, gaps to be filled. An example? In 2019 and 2020, we found funding

to cover university diplomas in West Africa, which freed up MAVA's commitment to this topic. We were then able to reallocate the budget to a nascent initiative for children, youth-conservation.org. A new chapter in an exciting new adventure!

**Geoffroy Mauvais,**  
IUCN-Papaco



Above: Information meeting in Cameroon on the IUCN-Papaco MOOCs.

### Circular economy China

We had a meeting with MAVA in 2017 to share our ambition to start a circular economy programme in China. Our approach to circular economy is about systems change, entering through the lens of global material flows, and we knew that China as the world's largest manufacturing nation was a massive actor in this system. So we felt convinced of the need to work there. But it would be a huge project requiring substantial resources, and there was a healthy level of risk attached as we would be the first NGO to try and work on circular economy in China. Our meeting ended up being quite short and hugely catalytic. There was an amazing moment when MAVA said to us: "Yes, we think you are right, we don't know how you are going to do it but we believe you are the right partner to try."

It was a moment that made me realise MAVA truly understood our approach to systems change, and also that they trusted us to make an impact and were willing to put forward the essential seed funding to let us begin. This was a realisation of true partnership and we were blown away by that and the opportunity it created.

**Olivia Finch,**  
Ellen MacArthur Foundation







### The whole process: from the idea to the reality

MAVA's collaboration meant for me the possibility to act creatively towards achieving the goals of our organisation. Everything started when I had the opportunity to reflect about the impact of the actions we were doing in the Land Stewardship Programme and how they were contributing towards achieving our mission. It was an interesting process that led us to discuss new ways of getting closer to it.

MAVA's approach to grant making allows organisations to be flexible and adapt to new realities. It also allows us to follow a learning process and improve the way we

work. In my personal case that meant that I was able to propose new activities, which we were able to test and, in fact, confirm that were truly impactful. Thanks to them we started organising two new lines of action. The first was training for farmers that included individual advice to accompany them in their process of adopting new sustainable practices. We realised that this individual advising was key to bridging the gap between theory and practice. It was the element that made the difference.

The second was a new way of product and farm promotion. We started organising public excursions to farms, which finished with a tasting of their products.

At the end of each excursion a list was opened for everyone interested in receiving direct information from the farmers about their products. This little detail made a big difference for them because it allowed them to significantly increase their pool of clients. Getting to know the farmer and the farm personally truly impacted the visitors and they became loyal clients.

For me, personally, being able to be creative and try new activities was really fulfilling and made me feel that I could contribute towards a real change in my surroundings.

**Jara Febrer,**  
**GOB Menorca**

### In it together

I remember the deep personal interest of both Luc Hoffmann and André Hoffmann in the topic we had battled with: If we (as WWF or the conservation movement or humanity) truly want to save biodiversity around the world (and keep the biosphere healthy for life), should we not systematically track the underlying drivers that are eroding that health? Should we not monitor if overall we are making progress, and whether our interventions have impact? Given that human demand on ecosystems must stay within the ecosystems' means to avoid

depletion, would it not be useful to track how the world, countries, cities, companies, individuals are doing?

This common passion led to long-standing collaborations with MAVA Foundation, with surprising openness and mutual engagement. Having the funders be engaged with that level of curiosity and honesty has been inspiring. It allowed us to share successes and failures, and learn together. It was a true joining of passion and purpose, not just something nice and noble on the side, but the collaboration turned into a joint expression of the world

we wanted to build together. I loved the honest conversations and our common causes of inspiration. This also allowed for much more experimentation, because we all knew how much innovation and trying it would take to shift all of our brothers' and sisters' attention to recognising the significance of intact nature as the foundational force (and "capital") for everything else, the truly ultimate means enabling anything else.

**Mathis Wackernagel,**  
**Global Footprint Network**





## A key player in biodiversity conservation in Vaud

As part of the implementation of the Swiss strategy, the Federal Council decided on 18 May 2016 to allocate additional funding to the cantons, subject to a financial contribution from them or from third parties ranging from 35 to 50 per cent, for the implementation of urgent measures for the restoration and regeneration of biotopes of national importance.

At that time, the canton of Vaud did not yet have a biodiversity action plan and the cantonal funds available did not allow it to apply for additional federal

funding. The announcement of MAVA's increased commitment to concrete measures in favour of biodiversity in the canton made it possible to benefit from federal subsidies. Above all, it made it possible to mobilise the cantonal authorities and politicians on the needs of the canton, the path to be followed to preserve biodiversity, the relevance of private-public partnerships, and finally the importance of pooling forces and exploiting synergies between actors.

MAVA thus played a key role in the canton on two levels: on the one hand, it served as financial leverage by making it public that this temporary aid would eventually be provided by the

canton and that in this context, the state had a major responsibility; on the other hand, in the form of added value of sharing common values and of a long-term commitment to work together (NGOs, civil society, managers, and canton).

**Catherine Strehler Perrin,**  
Canton de Vaud, Switzerland



Below: A group of students from the SANU training 'Formation Chef de projets Nature et Environnement' with a civilian service member of the Gruyère Pays-d'Enhaut Regional Nature Park. The fruit trees were planted as part of a woodland grazing project.



policy and that of core allies. In 2018, MAVA provided additional support for us to broaden our activities on the governance of finance and thus the often hidden but crucial role of central banks and financial supervisors for sustainable prosperity. And in 2020, a grant from MAVA for our organisational development was instrumental in moving CEP to the next phase.

Without MAVA, CEP would not be where we are today. Not even close. And without MAVA, the recognition of the crucial role of economic policy for sustainability would not be where it currently stands. Many things have already changed over the last few years. Central banks have started engaging on climate risks as well as on the distributional effects of their policies. Financial supervisors have brought environmental objectives onto their agenda. Tax policymakers and other stakeholders are putting a greater spotlight on the sustainability effects of the trillions in dollars that governments forgo in tax expenditures each year. And the environmental and social impacts of global trade are continuously moving up policy agendas. The community pursuing these changes has come a long way. It has also built a strong foundation for many further engagements in the years to come. MAVA was critical for that. Thank you!

**Alexander Barkawi,**  
Council on Economic Policies

## Economic policy for sustainability

When we started the Council on Economic Policies (CEP) in 2012, our aim to build an international economic policy think tank for sustainability did not really fit into the world of grantmaking for environmental and social causes. The usual approach of foundations back then was to support capacity-building and engagement in relation to a particular environmental or social objective. Our focus was on fiscal, monetary and trade policy, and their vital role for the sustainability agenda as a whole was somewhat at odds with that.

It was the openness and pioneering spirit of a few funders that enabled us to press ahead. MAVA was one of them and has been at our side ever since. In 2014, its Collaborate4Impact initiative not only provided a platform to move economic policies up the sustainability agenda, but also put a strong spotlight on the opportunity for collaborative engagements in the space.

Shortly thereafter, MAVA and Future Foundations co-launched Partners for a New Economy (P4NE) as their own collaborative initiative in the field. Through P4NE, MAVA became a key funder of our own work on monetary





# UNITING THE CONSERVATION COMMUNITY

*These stories describe the community of actors MAVA built and the methods it used to solidify their collaboration, whether through establishing initial connections between like-minded players, nurturing networks transcending the boundaries of organisations or borders, deepening existing relationships between conservationists or helping to fund the creation of physical convening spaces, research centres and infrastructure. Conservation faces many challenges in the coming decades and the foundation saw that a united front would be essential to tackling the work ahead, helping individuals to believe in their work and ability to drive change.*

*In its final years, MAVA invested even more of its resources and energy into preparing its partners for a future without its funding. One of its most powerful tools to achieve this was the creation of the outcome action plans that convened related partners in joint missions, catalysing collaboration between organisations more accustomed to competing for funding, which is described in several memories shared in this section.*



Left: Training future conservationists at the University of Basel. Photo taken on 12 May 2017 at the research station Petite Camargue Alsacienne.



## 11 different realities coming together for Maristanis

The governance activity within the Maristanis project was to me the most exciting and difficult part, with ups and downs and definitely big learnings for the future.

What particularly interested me was to put together 11 municipalities, 11 different realities that for centuries have not collaborated together and have planned in their territory

in a non-homogeneous way, often even without consulting with each other, especially on environmental issues. Starting the process of training and sharing environmental data has been a historic moment not only for the Oristanese, but for the whole of Sardinia.

In general, there has always been an unwillingness to work together, but in the Maristanis programme it was possible to bring together these municipalities and other key players from different fields such as agriculture, fishing and tourism.

There was resistance, but we were able to move forward thanks to the continuity of MAVA and Maristanis. Often, short-term projects do not allow the opportunity to overcome obstacles in the same way, but thanks to Maristanis' five-year duration and the security that MAVA gave us, we were capable of overcoming the initial difficulties.

**Alessio Satta,**  
MEDSEA Foundation

## A story of trust

The management of a MAVA scheme, and the MedBycatch project in particular, was an immense pleasure, especially seeing the achievement of objectives that initially seemed so difficult. With this project, we didn't just create a team, but a real family around the same theme.

We were able to be creative and innovate, to adapt, improve and support each other, to use each other's strengths and minimise each other's weaknesses, to complement each other, and to become indispensable to one another. We created what is most difficult: a climate of trust between scientist and fisherman, between decision-maker and scientist, between fisherman and decision-maker and much more. We hear people around us say, I'm proud to belong to the MedBycatch family!

From this point, we can only achieve excellent results with both



the pride of having contributed to it, the awareness that it is a joint task for the group, and above all that it is our union that has created our strength and which will be our strength for the future. Finally, I can say that MAVA has made it possible to bring out what is most human in each of us and made this the best tool for implementing

concrete and effective actions for the conservation of biodiversity. There are many indicators of this success that we can proudly present to the world while loudly proclaiming that change is possible.

**Anis Zarrouk,**  
UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC



## Together for nature

When I heard for the first time that MAVA would close in 2022, I had mixed feelings and one question: why? Why close such a successful organisation? Our experience with MAVA has been so exceptional and we were aware of the differences MAVA had made through its funding programme, not only for us but for the sector.

Over time, I learned more and more about the different strategies of MAVA to help not only us, but the entire community, to develop and to grow. My doubts became smaller and smaller. I learned about the transformational impact of programmatic partnership and the related

flexibility which allowed us to follow our priorities. I learned about the opportunities of the Leaders for Nature Academy and the big impact of its work on me and on our organisation. And I learned about the intention to shift our sector from a group of competing organisations to a real community in which members understand the benefits of collaboration.

At the beginning, I was still very sceptical and thought to myself: once the funding ends, this community will fall apart and most likely we will go back to the mode of competition. Now, some years later, I am much more optimistic. I am convinced we can nurture our community further and can

grow further – even without MAVA as facilitator and funder. It is in our hands and I trust that we will be able to maintain and develop MAVA's legacy: a strong community of nature conservation organisations working in the Mediterranean Basin for nature and people.

**Gabriel Schwaderer,**  
EuroNatur



Above: Gathering of the first cohort of the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy in Jordan, July 2018. One of the days was spent at the Ajloun Forest Reserve run by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), and in this photo, Mowgli Mentoring is training senior professionals on mentoring.





now drafting an implementation oriented circular economy master plan.

Above all, it is also thanks to MAVA's persistence, that a national movement called Circular Economy Switzerland has emerged from a series of individual projects. For me, a consistent and long-term picture of the foundation has emerged over the years. It hurts and I will miss MAVA and its people. At the same time, thanks to the wise setup of the projects, MAVA's ideas and initiatives will continue to flourish and have a long-term impact.

Thank you MAVA!

**Marco Grossmann,**  
**ecos**

and organisational sustainability of this partnership in order to continue its strong existence after 2022. Being a part of that critical meeting that took place in Gland 10 years ago, witnessing the impact of the decisions taken there 10 years later and taking part in this process from the very beginning is one of the success stories that I have enjoyed and been proud of in all my years in the field of nature protection.

**Engin Yilmaz,**  
**Yolda Initiative & Alliance**  
**for Mediterranean Nature**  
**and Culture**

## Ecosystem building

For me, the Circular Cities Switzerland initiative was the beginning of the joint journey – at a time when circular economy was not even a buzzword. Together with Circle Economy from the Netherlands, we were able to sensitise the five largest cities in Switzerland and their

stakeholders, develop strategies and help shape concrete projects.

This road was not without obstacles and not always a straight line, but thanks to MAVA's flexibility, the basic idea has been successfully implanted and concrete projects have been implemented. It is also directly attributable to the initiative that the capital of Switzerland is

## Together, we can deliver far more

Although the Alliance for Mediterranean Nature and Culture, of which the Yolda Initiative is both the co-founder and the coordinator, seems to have been formally established in 2021, the adventure of this regional partnership of 13 organisations actually started back in 2012 – thanks to MAVA.

Under the leadership, initiative and hosting of MAVA, experienced people and organisations working in the field of nature and culture came together in Switzerland in 2012. Our focus was on the current state of traditional production forms and cultural practices, which have positive outcomes in terms of nature conservation,

and what can be done to protect these threatened practices and communities, and therefore biodiversity.

One of the most important outcomes of this small meeting was the decision to develop cooperation at the regional level to scale up our collective impact. This cooperation, initiated by the people and organisations at that meeting under the leadership of MAVA, has turned into a huge partnership that has a real impact on a national, regional and global scale, again with the support of MAVA. MAVA became one of the most important architects of this process with its leadership and facilitation.

MAVA has provided all kinds of support to ensure the financial

## Mobilising the movement for a nature-positive world

Negotiations for a 10-year Global Biodiversity Framework – an action plan for nature through the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity – were going slowly in Geneva in March 2022, with no agreement on the mission or direction, and insufficient leadership from governments to drive towards an ambitious outcome. This was at odds with the societal expectation for action on nature which has grown significantly in the past few years.

We needed to act, to help get negotiations back on track. So a number of organisations came together and discussed a way to ensure that all 190+ countries present for the negotiations would understand the global expectation on them. We created a series of placards, each one succinctly capturing the overwhelming support for nature: “1,000 companies calling to reverse nature loss”, “89 financial institutions calling to reverse nature loss”, “94 heads of state calling to reverse nature loss”, and “330 civil society organisations calling for a nature-positive world”.

The placards themselves summed up perfectly the growing movement for nature which has been building. Much of this growth can be traced back to initiatives by various organisational partnerships, with one partner particularly ubiquitous – MAVA. WWF has many different kinds of partners and partnerships across its network of offices worldwide,

but that network does not always communicate and align itself internally and tap more of its potential. By providing support to WWF International for strategy development, coordination, communications and technical expertise, MAVA was pivotal in aligning the WWF network around a common strategy, engaging heads of government and their ministries, UN institutions, business leaders, the finance sector and civil society.

24 hours later in Geneva, a nature-positive mission for the Global Biodiversity Framework was tabled in the formal negotiations by the government of Zambia, quickly enjoying support among many governments present. The unifying message had been delivered by an empowered and diverse coalition of voices, and heard and heeded

by governments. It should soon be endorsed when the whole framework is agreed in Kunming, China, setting a clear direction for all nature conservation efforts for the rest of the decade, to help ensure there is more nature in 2030 than at the beginning of the decade.

The support and partnership of MAVA has not only had a lasting impact in moving nature much higher up the global agenda. It has also helped the WWF network develop and implement an ambitious strategy, grow its advocacy muscle, and also helped build new and enduring relationships with key influencers. This is exactly the kind of partnership that WWF cherishes.

**Gavin Edwards,**  
**WWF International**







some wooden trunks and old chairs around it. We sat together around the fire and talked about our shared ambition to protect and restore nature, and shared other stories. We were one group enjoying nature and each other's company. At that moment, we felt that the friendship with MAVA, which had begun 12 years earlier, was renewed. In the period of 2012 to 2016, we have been able to develop Faia Brava more or less to its present shape, and we were able to join several LIFE projects, something that before was not yet possible.

MAVA stayed by our side when in 2018 ATN suffered a difficult financial situation, and MAVA gave support to further professionalise the organisation in the period of 2018 to 2020. We consequently changed a lot of things internally to be best prepared for the future. MAVA was present with a critical view on the one hand and a caring heart on the other hand.

Today we can say that Faia Brava has grown to a nature jewel in the Côa Valley, with a reputation far beyond the Portuguese borders. And our organisation – today called Faia Brava ATN – has become a regional nature NGO, well embedded in Portuguese society.

This would not have been possible without the long-term support of MAVA. Thank you so much, dear Hoffmann family and MAVA team!

**Henk Smit, Ana Berliner and Antonio Monteiro,**  
**Associação Transumância e Natureza**

## How MAVA made the difference when we built Faia Brava Reserve

In June 2022, Faia Brava ATN celebrated 22 years of building the Reserva da Faia Brava, Portugal. Today, the reserve has reached a size of more than 1,000 hectares, along a 7km stretch of the Côa river. We are now able to protect the main habitats for cliff breeders, and in addition, Faia Brava offers a habitat for countless species. Private nature conservationists have stepped in and bought more than 300 hectares next to Faia Brava to create an ecological unit. To a large extent, these

developments were made possible by the MAVA Foundation, and we are happy to share the story.

In 2000, the Associação Transumância e Natureza (ATN) was founded in the presence of Dr Luc Hoffmann who made the acquisition of the first key habitats. In 2009, the Portuguese government stepped in, providing the new Reserva da Faia Brava with the formal status of Private Protected Area.

An extraordinary moment for us was MAVA's visit to Faia Brava in May 2012. It was rainy and cold, so we made a campfire and put

## Networks for nature

For me, one of the most important legacies of MAVA will be the message that if we work together, we can achieve real impacts that contribute to preserving our natural resources for future generations.

MAVA as an institution is a clear example of how one family from

the private sector has contributed to generate a collective vision of power to drive real changes that have helped to protect nature. This example should be an inspiration for other private institutions. The networks of conservation organisations that it has helped to consolidate are alive and best placed to follow MAVA's vision and aims. Being part of these networks of experts and institutions is an

added value and special in my personal and professional experience.

**Lourdes Lázaro-Marín,**  
**IUCN Centre for**  
**Mediterranean Cooperation**



## Great moments with great people

This story begins in 2007. The CBD-Habitat Foundation, accompanied by Luc Hoffmann and Jean-Paul Taris, visits Guinea-Bissau for the first time, more precisely the Bijagós archipelago, an African natural paradise. Its ancestral and animist culture brought us into this new challenge: to develop a project

compatible with the conservation of biodiversity and the Bijagó culture. But most important to us are the memories of times like this: our heroes together, those people who fought for conservation, some of whom are no longer with us, but who were an important part of our lives.

**Nuria El Khadir,**  
**CBD-Habitat**



Above: Luc Hoffmann, Francisco Conduto de Pina (Secretary of State for Tourism, Guinea-Bissau), Nelson Gomes Dias (IUCN), Nuria El Khadir (CBD-Habitat), Pierre Campredon (IUCN International Consultant) and Alfredo Simão Da Silva (Director of IBAP).



Creating a conservation family

It was a moment of happiness and celebration at Morro beach after a tough but successful loggerhead turtle nesting season in 2015, with very low nesting numbers and scarce resources to protect them. For me, this image beautifully visualises the approach to conservation we developed –

supporting local communities to be the stewards of their resources. Simply put, it shows people and nature, which is what conservation should be about.

In this image, we can see a sea turtle made of over 100 people committed to their conservation and the sustainable development of an island, Maio in Cape Verde, including rangers, fishermen,

women hosting the turtle team at their homes, and many local, national and international volunteers, community members and authorities, as well as the Fundação Maio Biodiversidade team.

**Arnau Teixidor,**  
**Fundação Maio Biodiversidade**



A strong nature conservation community

One of the most remarkable things about MAVA and its team is the real and genuine will to help not only nature and communities, but also the partners that work in the field. This spirit and vision of generosity, support and positive and constructive contribution spreads towards the partners that in turn adopt it for themselves.

I believe that this has led to the creation of a huge nature conservation community and even family in West Africa which will be one of the greatest and most solid legacies of MAVA. The creation of organisational development programmes for partners to guide them to become better and more effective organisations is the greatest example of this spirit of genuine support and care for partners.

**Pablo Fernandez de Larrinoa,**  
**CBD-Habitat**



Above: CBD-Habitat deploying a GPS ankle bracelet prototype for the first time, technology that would finally show them the foraging areas of Mediterranean monk seals within the Cabo Blanco population.

A new future for the raso lark

This photo [left] shows Biosfera 1 and SPEA working together for a better future for the endangered raso lark. The future is in our hands!

**Joana Bores,**  
**SPEA and Biosfera 1**







# PLANTING SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE

*Some partners recounted anecdotes about MAVA’s role in raising awareness of conservation issues, including engaging new audiences. Many of these stories call to mind Luc’s motto of protecting nature “with man, not against him”. Through supporting its partner organisations to raise the profile of local conservation issues and help communities understand the importance of protecting their natural heritage, the foundation inspired many people to take action for nature.*

*In these memories, we also hear about research funded by MAVA that made a significant difference to the understanding and knowledge of not just individual practitioners or partners but also the wider conservation sector, and which will have a far-reaching legacy.*



Left: Nature discovery activities at the BirdLife nature centre at La Sauge in Cudrefin, Switzerland.



## Connecting the Tour du Valat to the Galápagos

The Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galápagos Islands approached MAVA for support in 2010, knowing that it was a funding organisation that understood that lasting conservation needs to be based in solid science. We also knew that MAVA was not interested in quick results, but understood that lasting conservation needs engaged people and sustained organisational structures.

I had experienced all that personally and firsthand when volunteering for Luc Hoffmann's Tour du Valat 60 years ago. He was a shining light for all of us conservationists who met him, not so much as a writer or speaker, but as a presence, a credible scientist and an inspirational human being. He and his organisation MAVA understood that, while being involved in the nitty-gritty of on-the-ground conservation, we must work on the 'bigger picture'.

MAVA's multi-year support of the Charles Darwin Foundation was absolutely critical for that organisation and for the conservation of the Galápagos. I am in regular contact with the work on the Galápagos and was on the Islands recently. I can report that, on the whole, things are looking good there, thanks to MAVA's support during hard times.

**Peter Kramer,**  
Charles Darwin Foundation  
for the Galápagos Islands



## Building a clean circular economy

A colleague who I'll call S, from another NGO that my organisation collaborates with, called me and asked for an introduction to a contact at the European Commission. S was concerned that one of the strategies the Commission was currently working on, the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS), was not going to be as strong as necessary with regards to preventing chemical contamination in the circular economy. And since my contact was playing a critical role at the Commission in developing the CSS, S wanted to speak with them.

So, I reached out to my Commission contact by email, suggesting an introductory meeting so they could meet S and discuss the CSS. Their reply came swiftly: Yes, indeed, the CSS was an issue and it was time to hear the voice of science. My Commission contact invited me to hold a webinar giving the scientific perspective for colleagues at the Commission working on CSS. We had five days to organise it! My NGO colleague S briefed me on what aspects were most critical, and together with two of our organisation's board members, who are both academic scientists and distinguished experts on chemicals and environmental impacts, we planned the webinar. One of the board members even interrupted his summer vacation for this!

In the end, we delivered three concise, to the point presentations about hazardous chemicals and chemical risk assessment,

and mixture toxicity and food contact materials as sources of hazardous chemicals. The webinar participants, all members of the European Commission from different cabinets and directorates general, asked a few questions – and then the show was over.

We were very pleased with the possibility to provide input at such a high level – this would not have happened without the request from S and our MAVA-funded collaboration on the clean circular economy. The CSS was then published a couple of months later and the rest is history: the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability is an ambitious document that is based on current scientific understanding. And I like to think that our high-level intervention played a part in this. Thank you MAVA for enabling this success!

**Jane Muncke,**  
Food Packaging Forum



## Monitoring migratory shorebirds on a global scale

A decade ago, MAVA supported coastal migratory birds through their West Africa programme. This BirdLife-led project set out to improve the conservation of migratory birds in key coastal wetlands from Mauritania to Sierra Leone and Cape Verde. One of the work areas was monitoring migratory birds. While the geographic scope of the project was impressive, it was nothing compared to what migratory shorebirds do. They don't restrict themselves to a few countries in West Africa; their home is from

the Arctic tundra in Russia and Greenland all the way to southern Africa. They make impressive, twice-yearly journeys of up to 10,000km. To really be able to say something about how bird populations are doing and what sites are most important, you need to count all the birds at the same time throughout the flyway. That is something that can't be done by any organisation on its own. In this project, we brought together all the organisations involved in counting birds. We had a hard look at the different objectives and approaches, and came up with a standard methodology that all were willing to use. And it worked!

The counts are now running, and as a result the capacity of people and organisations to conserve migratory birds is growing. I feel proud every time a new report with the results of a count is published. It makes me think back to the days when so many organisations were working in isolation and regular counts of coastal wetlands of the whole of the East Atlantic Flyway was still a very far-fetched idea. Being able to invest, work together and adapt plans as needed was the key to success. A success that can be traced back to the support and approach of MAVA. Thank you!

**Barend van Gernerden,**  
**BirdLife International**



## Ukrainian Atlas

This is a story about the book. The first bird atlas in the history of Ukrainian ornithology, and probably the last one for many years, including the most accurate maps and data.

This is a story about people. Cooperation of more than 100 ornithologists in Ukraine, working together to collect the data, putting them all together and checking the maps in order to make it the best book about bird distribution in Ukraine.

This is a story about rare birds and their conservation. The opportunity to examine the most far-away corners, with the help of MAVA's funding, and to clarify the distribution, status and abundance of all breeding rare species in Ukraine.

And, of course, this is a story about friendship, collaboration and cooperation – between many institutions in Europe to help Ukraine to make it happen. MAVA made it happen. Only with its support was it possible to



involve so many ornithologists, to collect the field data, to verify them, and – as a result – to publish a book.

**Tatiana Kuzmenko,**  
**Swiss Ornithological Institute**  
**and Ukrainian Society for the**  
**Protection of Birds**

## Changing perceptions

It was a training workshop for fisheries observers on protocols for collecting data about bycatch birds and sea turtles at sea. During the last day of the workshop, an observer took the floor to give a testimony which really marked me: "I have been in the field of fishing for 20 to 25 years. I am almost 50 years old and for the first time I have heard about and understand

the importance of species like birds and turtles in the ocean. Before, we killed them because we saw them more as an annoyance than anything. Thank you for this new knowledge, we will now pay more attention to these species because the survival of our families depends heavily on it."

A few words that may seem innocuous but so heavy with meaning. That's why we love

this work, the passion for sharing and to make people understand the importance of nature is the best legacy that can be left in West Africa.

**Oumar Ba,**  
**BirdLife International**





## Protecting the last wild river in Europe

Since its creation in December 2014, EcoAlbania has been the local partner for Albania in the MAVA-funded campaign Save the Blue Heart of Europe. The campaign aims to protect the most valuable rivers in southeast Europe from destruction by uncontrolled hydropower projects. It also worked on a project titled “Saving Europe’s last free flowing wild river – Vjosa/Aoos” which aims to raise public awareness about the Vjosa River, its ecological value and vulnerability, and the work being done to protect the river from hydropower plant plans.

This eight-year journey of EcoAlbania has thrilled us with its ups and downs, its successes and disappointments. We have worked very hard to protect the last wild river in Europe and will

keep doing it. The Vjosa campaign reached its peak when we won the litigation case for the hydropower of Poçem. Three years after the start of the campaign, in December 2016, EcoAlbania took the matter to the court, making it the first environmental case appealed in court. In the beginning, it was hard and didn’t look very promising, because there were no precedent cases and the interest of the government in the Poçem hydropower development was significant.

On 2 May 2017, the first instance of the administration court decided to declare the cancellation of the concession contract, signed between the Ministry of Energy and Industry and the Turkish company Kovlu Energji, as a result of a series of violations of procedural law. The partners of Vjosa Campaign cheered this decision and this was the moment

that Vjosa became an inspirational story for all the organisations in Albania focused on environmental issues. After this, many other NGOs have brought environmental cases to court. Only then did we understand the success that this campaign meant. We would never have won this battle without the help of all the partners and the support from MAVA.

This first victory gave us the motivation to further influence the governmental decision to declare Vjosa River a national park, giving the waterway the right protection that it deserves.

**Besjana Guri,**  
EcoAlbania



Above: The Vjosa river in southwestern Albania.

## The birth of an MPA

In 2016, I was invited by WWF Greece to participate as a scientific expert in a co-management committee for establishing a new marine protected area (MPA) in the Aegean Sea. After two years and a series of lengthy meetings with local stakeholders, we came to an agreement and Gyaros island became the most recent MPA in the Mediterranean Sea.

However, all past MPAs in Greece lacked any information on their status before the establishment of a protected status (some even lack information on their current status). MAVA provided the means to launch a baseline knowledge survey. This enabled me and the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR) scientific team to embark on a unique journey. A series of experimental surveys (fishing, underwater visual census, hydro-acoustic and ichthyoplankton) allowed the sketching of a multifaceted picture of the MPA status at its beginnings and monitoring its evolution during its first five years. Not only have we documented the rapid response and recovery of the marine biota in just a few years, but we were allowed to reason on how different constituents of the ecosystem reacted to the absence of anthropogenic activities.

Moreover, engagement in the co-management process revealed how local communities, and specifically fishers, may object to MPAs due to being misinformed or unaware of potential benefits to the fishing income as well. We are absolutely confident that the

last five years have changed the mindset of all parties involved in this endeavour, from scientists to administrators and fishers.

Finally, I would like to thank MAVA for its flexibility and understanding

during the realisation of our tasks – which is not the norm for such projects.

**Dimitrios Damalas,**  
Hellenic Centre for  
Marine Research





### International collaboration for science and conservation

The support from the MAVA Foundation to the European Breeding Bird Atlas 2 (EBBA2) was absolutely irreplaceable – this helped us to motivate, train and support our colleagues in southern and eastern Europe to actively participate in EBBA2.

Due to many difficulties (lack of volunteer birdwatchers, difficult access to some areas and lack of equipment), running the breeding bird atlas in these countries was a challenge. But with the support from the MAVA Foundation,

we, together with the national coordinators and their colleagues, were able to collect the data needed for the atlas. Simple, small grants for individual countries proved to be a good way forward. Without MAVA Foundation's contribution, the maps of bird distribution in EBBA2 would have many more gaps.

However, it's not only the data on bird distribution and abundance which we were able to collect and make available to nature conservationists at an international scale that count. Equally valuable are the lessons which the national coordinators learned from us and we learned from them.

The lessons have been used in our further effort to monitor birds in Europe.

Among other activities supported by the MAVA Foundation within EBBA2, we organised training events in several eastern European countries. International experts from the European Bird Census Council (EBCC) came to the countries where they met local colleagues. The methodology was explained and discussed and we did fieldwork together.

**Verena Keller, Sergi Herrando and Petr Voříšek**  
European Bird Census Council via Swiss Ornithological Institute



### Lasting success of an initial failure

A while ago, we received an article for review from an Indian colleague, who stated in this mail: “We were applying the SCALP Criteria – if you know what this is.” Indeed we knew, because we had developed these criteria long ago ourselves.

This is the story of a MAVA-supported project that never reached its original goal, but nevertheless had an impact around the globe. The project Status and Conservation of the Alpine Lynx Population (SCALP) aimed to coordinate lynx conservation and management across the Alps to allow lynx to spread across the Alpine Arc. It was prompted by a field study of Petra Kaczensky and Thomas Huber in Carinthia, Austria, where they demonstrated that the vast majority of officially reported lynx observations were incorrect. After a pan-Alpine

review of the situation of the lynx in Engelberg, Switzerland in 1995, it was concluded that monitoring across the Alps needed to be standardised and conservation efforts between the Alpine countries coordinated.

The work on a common monitoring scheme resulted – among other standardised approaches – in the introduction of the SCALP Criteria, a very simple system to differentiate the consistency of reported observations. The SCALP principles are not only continuously applied in the Alps, and indeed in most of the lynx populations in Europe, they have also spread across the world and have become a standard – with variations – for the presentation of chance observations compiled for monitoring purposes, especially for large carnivores.

However, the expectations of the SCALP Expert Group that the monitoring tasks would

soon be taken over or at least financially supported by the wildlife authorities of all Alpine countries did not come true. France and Switzerland established state-supported monitoring soon after the presentation of the SCALP approach, but some Alpine countries lack such a system even today. Providentially, MAVA continued to support the SCALP coordination bureau and the work of the expert group until the foundation terminated its Alpine programme, recognising that such tedious work is important for the long-term conservation of the lynx in the Alps. The progress is slow but consistent; the spread of the lynx population across the Alpine Arc takes much longer than anyone would have expected.

**Anja Molinari-Jobin,**  
KORA-SCALP





# EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO PROTECT NATURE

*Many members of the MAVA team and board describe MAVA’s human legacy as their greatest source of pride. The foundation touched many lives, with impacts both big and small. This is reflected in the following memories, which share feelings of inspiration, refreshed energy, motivation and a stronger sense of purpose related to interactions with MAVA, many of which ended up being turning points in the storyteller’s life or career.*

*As well as positive emotions, the anecdotes also recount experiences of improving their technical skills and knowledge. One of the foundation’s biggest contributions to personal development was undoubtedly the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy and Programme, which several of these stories describe. The foundation recognised that strengthening individual members of the community benefits the whole, and that participants’ employers will prosper from their upskilling for years to come.*



Left: MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy alumni gathering in London, October 2022.





Birds connect the world

I first heard of the MAVA Foundation at university, but my direct relationship with MAVA started three years ago in 2019, through the Waders of the Bijagós project coordinated by IBAP in Guinea-Bissau – specifically in the Bijagós archipelagos.

The experience has been rich in lessons learned through the activities undertaken in the framework of the project, such as capacity building focused on conservation, exchange and sharing of knowledge and experiences, and other important topics.

The research component, which involves knowledge-sharing between national and international researchers, has strengthened the issue of connectivity of waders (migratory birds) through the East Atlantic Flyway. Using the signal transmission device, the results showed the importance of the Bijagós archipelagos as a key site in the connectivity of the East Atlantic migratory route. This highlighted the value of Guinea-Bissau in the field of conservation.

There are not enough words to thank MAVA for believing in people, especially for the

opportunity it offers to young people like me, to develop not only my professional and technical skills – but also my skills for the development of my country.

**Samuel Ledo Pontes,**  
**IBAP**



The power of an inspiring person

In 1993, I worked as a tourist guide to fund my studies and was assigned to a WWF group visiting Patagonia. I interacted with all the country leaders after their annual meeting in Buenos Aires, including one humble and simple man who was interested in birds, just like me. He said he would send me a copy of a new book called Handbook of the *Birds of the World*, which he did, accompanied by a handwritten letter signed “Luc Hoffmann”.

From then on, we were in regular contact and he was always

interested in my career, which was difficult to continue given the never-ending instability issues in my country, Argentina. I finished my first degree in biology and also my PhD, and he was always encouraging me to make progress.

At some point, I learned who he was and the great experience he had in setting up conservation organisations. When I decided to create the Global Penguin Society, I met him and he accepted to join our board. From then onwards, he was always a very valuable source of advice. In 1995, thanks to MAVA Foundation, we created the largest UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in

Argentina with 3.1 million hectares, as well as a marine protected area that benefits half a million penguins. So far, we have been able to protect 13 million hectares of penguin habitat. Luc was such an inspiration and allowed me to move forward in difficult moments. His legacy continues through our work to protect penguins, the oceans and the entire planet.

**Pablo Borboroglu,**  
**Global Penguin Society**





Dedication to conservation

There have been several moments that have had an effect on me personally. One moment that I can highlight was when I was chosen as a hero of the MAVA Foundation for West Africa in 2020. It is a moment I will celebrate for a lifetime. This recognition has increased my responsibility towards the goals

of the MAVA Foundation and the sustainable development goals of my country and its sub-region. I would also like to highlight the influence that the foundation has left on Cape Verde, in terms of planning. It was through the foundation that the country drew up and made official its first management plan of the coastal area of one of the islands, the island of Boa Vista, aiming

towards the sustainable use of its coastal area.

**Euda Helena Miranda,**  
**Instituto Nacional de Gestão do Território**



Left: The MAVA board visiting the High Atlas of Morocco with the Global Diversity Foundation (GDF), September 2018.

The MAVA community

A few years ago, I was asked to organise the programme and logistics for a MAVA board meeting at our pilot site in the High Atlas of Morocco. At that time, I had only recently joined Global Diversity Foundation and I remember feeling

overwhelmed with such a big responsibility, as I wanted to make sure that the MAVA board would be impressed.

Once the board arrived, I felt a huge relief as I immediately felt they weren't in the High Atlas to be impressed – they were

Inspiring people across all sectors

I'm certainly far from alone in the point of view that the three years of our collaboration with the MAVA Foundation have been a highlight in bringing together actors within the ecosystem our organisation is active in. I am lucky and grateful to share this with dozens of my colleagues in Geneva and Lausanne, as well as fellow makers from other Swiss Impact Hubs and our global network at large. I'm sure this is further shared by many peers from within our partner organisations, and the circular economy enthusiasts, entrepreneurs and innovators benefiting from our project. It is this highlight of 'bringing together'

hundreds of actors from different sectors, industries and cultural backgrounds around a shared vision of a circular economy as a future-fit model for how we can live sustainably on this planet and each contribute to building an inclusive world for people and nature.

One specific highlight that came to my mind was the Factory17 event in December 2021 that we organised during the Geneva Building Bridges Week. André Hoffmann shared – among innovation pioneers from the global south and Europe – his very personal 'why' behind the 'what' he stands for. He spoke on stage for in front of a large crowd from the financial industry and employees of international

simply curious and eager to learn more about our region, projects and the conservation challenges we face. We hiked in the national park, had long talks about local fauna and flora and travelled to a remote village to meet local community members. I learned a lot through conversations with MAVA board members. This visit really reminded me how important it is to be surrounded by people that have a heart for nature and communities – it encourages and inspires you to keep on going, despite the environmental challenges of today's world.

**Pommelien Da Silva Cosme,**  
**Global Diversity Foundation**

organisations, as well as to anyone who followed via the live stream. This time the 'bringing together' was that of personal beliefs, values and action. This gave participants the opportunity to relate to his source of inspiration on a truly human level, and thus enabling them to reconnect to their own personal motivations and the strength needed to drive sustainable change.

**Felix Staehli,**  
**Impact Hub Geneva-Lausanne**





## Investing in conservationists

I am very grateful for MAVA's investment in the development of people working for nature conservation. The creation of exchange spaces during the pandemic has been a great help and an incredible support for isolated people. I have participated in several exchange training sessions; they have been very relevant and have taken me

out of my comfort zone each time to reflect and question myself. In fact, each time I participate in MAVA training I feel an evolution, a sense of learning, and that my ideas are nourished by innovation and benevolence. I would like to salute MAVA for its commitment and generosity towards training and capacity building.

**Houda El Alaoui,**  
IUCN Mediterranean



Above: Participants from the French cohort of the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy, 2019, during their 'Innoventure' week in Brussels – one week focusing on innovation. They had 10 minutes to build the highest tower possible with spaghetti and marshmallows. This photo shows the proud winning team.

## Working with MAVA is always beneficial

My experience with MAVA is through my involvement in the Institute for Environmental Sciences (ISE), a partner of Wetlands International Africa, in the PRISE and ResilienSEA projects. In these two projects, the ISE was entrusted with the development of training modules designed to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders in the management

of coastal ecosystems for the conservation of seagrass beds in West Africa and to improve knowledge of the impacts of infrastructures on sensitive ecosystems.

My participation in this exercise allowed me to learn more about the design of training modules for higher education institutions. It also enabled me to strengthen my pedagogical capacities through the development of a Massive

Open Online Course (MOOC) on the environmental management of the impacts of coastal infrastructures on sensitive ecosystems. These two MAVA projects have also allowed me to increase my knowledge of coastal conservation, to build new relationships and expand my professional network.

**Alioune Faye,**  
Institut des Sciences de  
l'Environnement de l'Université  
Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar

## A journey from volunteer to leader

In autumn 2017, Association BIOM organised the very first anti-poaching action in the Neretva Delta in Croatia, which is a black spot for the illegal killing of birds. I was then just a volunteer who was interested in nature protection, limiting the negative impact of people on nature and the preservation of amazing oases of biodiversity like river deltas in the Mediterranean.

I hoped it was just a rumour, I hoped the scale of poaching was an exaggeration. The Neretva river mouth could be one of the most peaceful places in the world – picture a full moon and mountains beautifully reflecting on the water surface. However, by 10pm there were more than 15 people in this area interested only in bird poaching. The sound of illegal calling devices spreads around the whole area and hundreds of shots can be heard. We see ducks and coots being shot every minute,

light torches being active all the time, ready for new birds to arrive. It does not matter if it is at night, out of the hunting grounds, in the ornithological reserve. Poaching occurs every night for the whole night. Poachers had no respect for any regulations.

Association BIOM decided it was time to react. In autumn and winter 2017, we – in cooperation with nature protection rangers – removed six illegal poaching hides from the ornithological reserves and helped to catch red-handed two poachers. It changed the game. Poachers felt they were no longer invisible, they were not untouchable.

Throughout the MAVA-funded projects Adriatic Flyway 3 and Adriatic Flyway 4, BIOM has conducted a regular monitoring of poaching activities in the area and regular anti-poaching actions. The number of active poachers has reduced significantly. Our methods of work are also being disseminated to other parts of

the country. Anti-poaching work has been successful, but also became a part of the Association BIOM identity. It is all thanks to the MAVA Foundation which created a platform to actively oppose environmental crime. BIOM developed the knowledge, capacities, experience and network to create and implement successful strategies to fight against bird crime. There is still a lot of work ahead, but at least one place in Croatia – the Neretva Delta – has been changed by MAVA-funded projects.

The lives of people like me and many of our volunteers all around Croatia have also been changed as we learned and felt empowered to fight against the illegal killing of birds. Five years later, I am a fully aware leader who is a part of the international Balkan network of people who want to stop the illegal killing of birds.

**Boleslaw Slocinski,**  
Association BIOM





## A breath of fresh air

The MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy has been a turning point for me, both personally and professionally. I had the opportunity to meet people active in nature conservation from all over Europe, West Africa and the Mediterranean basin: a breath of fresh air in a sometimes depressing environment where we are faced with colossal challenges and nothing seems to be moving forward. The values of MAVA have been shared, transmitted and internalised: benevolence, tolerance, love, passion.

I still remember an exercise we did in Rabat, under a radiant sun: the hero's journey. An introspective journey, which allows us to ask ourselves questions that we never take the time to answer and that are sometimes difficult to put into words. A complicated exercise but oh so useful and rewarding! The Academy programme also included being paired with a mentor. My mentor helped me a lot, sometimes by putting me up against a wall that could only be overcome through personal development. I quickly understood that the only barriers blocking

me were internal. What did I get out of it? More self-confidence and the desire to move forward, without fear of failure. I came out of this experience stronger, with the desire to pass on the values of MAVA and to act on my scale. I hope that the flame lit during these exchanges will continue to fuel my passion and my love for nature, and that together we can change things.

**Melanie Annen,**  
Parc naturel du Jorat

## Learning to better ourselves

I was lucky to be selected as part of the MAVA Leadership Academy, a journey where we learn how to be better leaders. And what an amazing adventure it is. Not only did we learn how to be better professionals, but also how to be a better person. And not only to

others, but to ourselves. I was – and still am – mind-blown by the activities, the sharing, the learning and the empathy that shapes our experience. I cannot wait to meet with my Cohort 6 family again, and I am so grateful for what MAVA has put together, thank you infinitely!

**Anaïk Anthonioz Blanc,**  
Luc Hoffmann Institute



Below: Participants from the French cohort of the MAVA Leaders for Nature Academy during their first one-week gathering in Casablanca, Morocco, 2019.



## Building resilience

The Resilience Project, financed by MAVA, was a scheme to support the strengthening of the institutional capacity of the NGO Tiniguena. It was a vital project for the sustainability of our organisation and the economic dynamism of local communities. The initiative strengthened our internal and external communication structures, supported initiatives to develop local products and knowledge, and reinforced our financial sustainability through new partnerships and projects.

The support for initiatives to enhance local products led to

the rehabilitation of three local production units to encourage the dynamism of the local economy. During this process, I had the opportunity to get to know these communities and understand how supporting sustainable production processes that value traditional knowledge are extremely important for local development. The process also put me in touch with the importance that the women's economy has for the survival of these communities and gave me the opportunity to experience how grassroots development drives the ownership of actions and, consequently, their effectiveness, the key to ensuring Guinea-Bissau's sustainable development.

Finally, for me, this project holds a special place in my heart, as it was my first experience of direct coordination of a project in my homeland, Guinea-Bissau, and it was the basis that made me, who grew up in the diaspora, sustain my engagement with Guinea-Bissau and fulfil my dream of contributing to the development of my land. Therefore, when we talk about MAVA's institutional support projects, I also talk about a life project, which allowed me to feed my dreams in the search for a more just Guinean society.

**Ruguiato Baldé,**  
Tiniguena



## MAVA's fingerprints

The first time I heard about this conservation community was through a criticism of the Foundation for the Banc d'Arguin (FIBA). I heard one person say: "This is an organisation that comes to our country to protect birds and has no respect for humans."

Then I started to come across more and more people who worked for FIBA. In fact, whenever I needed scientific information for my work, or an awareness-raising tool on biodiversity, I was directed to a person who had a link with the foundation, or provided me with a document produced by it.

This is how I met and got to know some wonderful people, all of them inspiring, generous and so humanistic... and I understood the origin of this bad perception of the work of these scientists who came to observe and study the birds of the park: a terrible fear of being deprived of access to their territories, the legacy of a rather recent colonisation and/or bad governance practices.

Thanks to FIBA and later MAVA, I personally learned to develop knowledge and skills in my perception of nature and all the good that could be gained by building links with it: spiritual, material and technical nourishment.

One of my best experiences, which comes back to me immediately, is definitely the Leaders for Nature Academy. It was truly an enriching, inspiring and resilience-building experience. In addition to all the discoveries,



I especially learned to take care of myself and my mental and physical health, which I had never learned to do previously.

I thank my Lord for giving me this opportunity which came at a time when I really needed it. The year 2021 was a particularly difficult year on a personal and professional level. Thanks to the support of the coaches of this training, in particular Richard, I managed to go back up a slope that was taking me to the bottom of the abyss.

So I can say, without any exaggeration, that if I am fulfilled today it is thanks to MAVA.

I am grateful to every person I have had the chance and privilege to meet. Since 2006, this magnificent community has inspired me, taught me, supported me and

given me the means, the resources, the knowledge, the capacities to realise the most beautiful projects! I am thinking in particular of: Pierre, Augusta, Frederic, Charlotte, Nelson, Alfredo, Simon, Nathalie, Antonello, Salla, Ahmed, Sidi, Bamba, Farida, Heyti, Sonia, Richard, Samantha, but also all the people I met (and continue to meet every day) during the realisation of my projects financed by MAVA, such as PRCM, Wetlands International, Bird Life, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the West African Coastal Areas Management Programme... and all the members of the platform of sea and coastline actors that has been built up over the years.

**Maimouna Saleck,**  
**ONG BiodiverCités**



## Building networks

The first Cambridge Masters in Conservation Leadership alumni event took place in 2018 at the David Attenborough Building. This image shows the celebration day of the event, in which all eight cohorts gave incredible presentations on their life since graduation, followed by a speech

by Sir David Attenborough. The energy and enthusiasm that emanated from each and every one of these inspiring and driven individuals was like nothing I have experienced before or since. There was so much excitement and so many happy tears at being together for the first time, and so much passion and commitment to make a difference as part of this

unique network of conservation leaders. I have fond memories of every second of those four days, and starting my role with that explosion of ideas and energy has made me feel lucky to get out of bed every day.

**Shelley Bolderson,**  
**The Cambridge Masters in Conservation Leadership**

## Upskilling conservationists

In 2018, I had the chance to join the Masters course in Conservation Leadership at the University of Cambridge, a programme supported by the MAVA Foundation. The Masters enabled me to gain the skills to scale up my game in terms of management, build a network with other passionate conservationists around the world (most of them from the global south), and better understand the trade-offs in conservation while developing critical thinking. Certainly, this was a once-in-a-

lifetime experience that deeply shaped my professional skill set through direct participation in an epicentre of innovation and a cutting-edge school of thought in environmental conservation.

After that experience, I collaborated in a wildlife trafficking initiative in Europe and the monitoring of sustainable development goals in Latin America. Nowadays, I coordinate the marine programme for BirdLife International in West Africa. During the last two years I have had the chance to directly work with the MAVA Foundation, our main supporter in the region.

As time goes by, I have realised that MAVA brings much more than financial support to the table: it's some sort of glue that spreads humanistic values across the partnership. Needless to say that I am grateful for its support, not only to our programme, but to the regions they work in. I am sure that the generations formed during the MAVA era will continue safeguarding the natural treasures worldwide.

**Alfonso Hernandez-Rios,**  
**BirdLife International**  
**West Africa**



### How MAVA helped change my career

I used to work in fund development and project management in the humanitarian sector. I joined the Shouf Biosphere Reserve to manage MAVA's M6 project, which aimed to promote sustainable land-use practices in the Mediterranean basin. My journey with and interest in biodiversity started with MAVA. The outcome action plan itself was very diverse

(conservation, restoration and economy) and able to link conservation with human beings. It connected us/me with other people/organisations doing the same job. I visited wonderful places and met very inspiring people. In particular, Menorca and Tour du Valat in the Camargue.

It was so challenging and so interesting that it motivated me to develop my knowledge and my skills – I wanted to know

more about this world. I am now engaged in developing projects related to conservation and biodiversity and supporting other institutions in my country and region. It is important to note that it had never occurred to me that I would be engaged in such a new and fresh start at my age – I was 58 when this journey began.

**Lina Sarkis,**  
**Al-Shouf Cedar Society/Shouf Biosphere Reserve**



### Always by our side

Although many of us have lots of happy memories of working with MAVA, I think that one thing stands out and that's the warmth and genuine concern for our success and wellbeing that we always felt from everyone involved in MAVA. They were there, by our side, ready to support us and with a sympathetic ear, in good times and in bad. Whenever we had difficulties or problems they were always available.

I remember one particular time, when we were struggling with a difficult situation over building ownership for an information centre with an important stakeholder very much against us. When you are working

somewhere quite isolated and are deeply absorbed in a problem, it is incredibly comforting and supportive to have someone to turn to, someone who is ready to discuss an issue with you, offer advice and give a perspective that links you to something greater than the small world of your particular problem.

It always meant so much to have someone who was ready to listen at any time, not only to hear about a difficulty but to help find solutions, to console you, and to share a problem with you. I never felt this was something given out of a sense of obligation or duty, but because the people at MAVA genuinely care about us and the struggles that can so often be encountered in conservation work.

This has been true even in the last few months, when we faced a heart-breaking avian influenza outbreak in Prespa's Dalmatian pelican colony. At a time when so much else has been happening at MAVA, as the foundation winds down its work, they were amongst the first to be in touch and offer their support and share their concern for the terrible losses we were seeing. This sense of unhesitating personal support has been precious and inspirational and will be sorely missed.

**Myrsini Malakou,**  
**Society for the Protection of Prespa**





## STORIES FROM OTHER FUNDERS

*As well as reaching out to partners past and present, MAVA also asked its fellow funders to describe how they saw its role in philanthropy. The foundation worked with and alongside many other funders over the years, building coalitions and trying to incrementally strengthen collaboration in the funding community.*

*In the last few years preceding MAVA's closure, it gradually passed the baton onto these other funders, many of which now fund its partners' work.*



## A lion of the foundation world

The Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer has had the opportunity to collaborate with the MAVA Foundation mainly in the framework of the environment group of the European Foundation Center (now Philea). The world of foundations is very diverse, particularly in terms of the size of the foundations. There are lions, large foundations like MAVA, and there are rats, small foundations like the Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer. MAVA has always been one of those lions that communicated with the rats in a non-condescending way. I always liked that very much.

This non-arrogant spirit was a hallmark of MAVA. It was the spirit of service that animated the team, led by Lynda Mansson. Philanthropy is an ethically complex activity, because the hand that gives is above the hand that receives. Only a genuine spirit of service can mitigate this raw power relationship. It is not condescension, we are demanding with those we value. Dialogue and a spirit of service have enabled MAVA to reconcile two often contradictory imperatives: continuity of support and adaptation to the convulsions of the world. MAVA has escaped the plague of foundations, the quest for improbable short-term innovation, an attitude that

tends to produce instability and insecurity for the actors. MAVA has supported many organisations over the long-term, recognising the importance of sustainability and evolution.

I watch MAVA disappear with melancholy. I console myself by thinking that the members of the team take with them this expertise and this state of mind, which will inspire the organisations in which they will pursue their careers.

**Matthieu Calame,**  
Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer

## A landmark in philanthropy

MAVA is and will remain a landmark in the Swiss philanthropy sector. By strategically strengthening a philanthropic ecosystem around conservation and biodiversity, the foundation has created a lasting impact to protect nature. The process of closing the foundation can serve as a role model for many other foundations that aim to actively manage their full lifecycle – from the starting point until their sunset.

**Georg von Schnurbein,**  
Center for Philanthropy Studies (CEPS) at the University of Basel

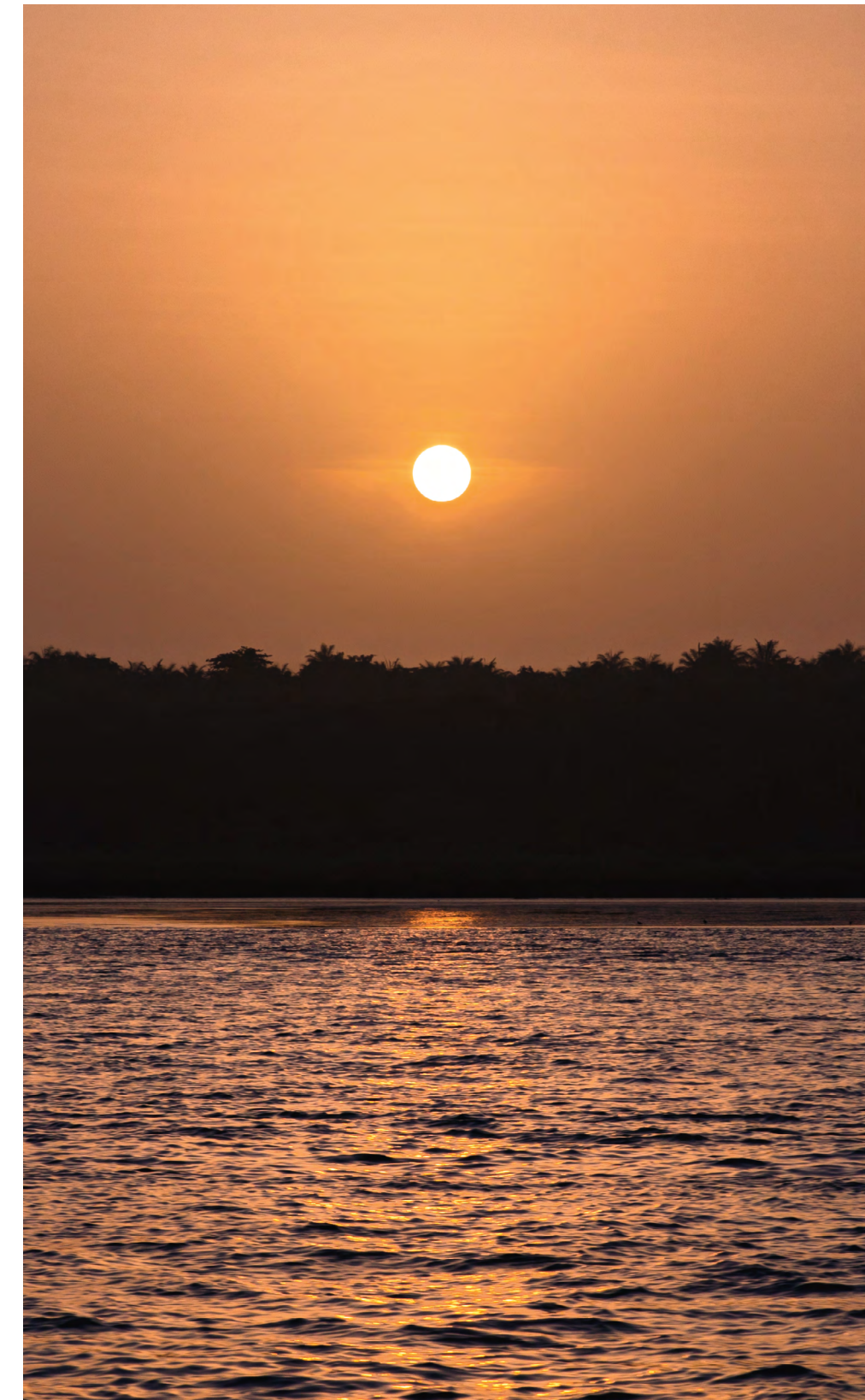
## Leaving a planet in a better state

MAVA and COMON are one side of the same coin. As fellow funders, we admire how MAVA has approached organisations who do good. Their publication Care for Those who Care for the Planet is a fantastic read to better understand how greater impact can be achieved through NGOs if you focus on leadership, capacity and staff enjoyment.

Our joint efforts to give the Peace Parks Foundation a continuous push will never be forgotten!

MAVA leaves us with a wealth of knowledge and a planet in a better state, despite the world being in turmoil.

**John Loudon,**  
COMON Foundation







### A foundation that will be greatly missed

Since its formation, MAVA has been an excellent example of efficient, focused and effective conservation. I am especially proud of the innovative coalition of funders that we have been able to build with MAVA and three other foundations for the conservation of the endangered monk seal of the Mediterranean. MAVA's role in conservation will be greatly missed!

**Claudio Segré,**  
Fondation Segré

### A source of expert knowledge

When we decided to increase our support for the environment, we naturally turned to MAVA. Its in-depth knowledge of the issues and actors enabled us to speed up the establishment of our Animals and Ecosystems unit. Several of MAVA's partners thus form a basis on which we have been able to build our new strategy.

**Marc Maugué,**  
Hans Wilsdorf Foundation



Above: First, CBD-Habitat educates teachers about environmental education in Mauritania. After that, the teachers can pass the knowledge onto their students.



### A strong legacy

In our work as a nature and environmental foundation, we have encountered the MAVA Foundation time and time again. It has achieved great success thanks to its clear strategy and extensive financial resources. Its work has always been about strengthening the actors, building capacities and working towards long-term change.

That is why it was a pleasure for us to have been able to build

up a concrete cooperation with the MAVA Foundation in the framework of the Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems (DIMFE) in recent years. We have found a competent partner in MAVA, which is why we have jointly succeeded in finding further donors to continue

our conservation work. In this way, the MAVA Foundation has helped to ensure that its legacy is preserved for the world and will live as long as possible.

**Mette Skov,**  
Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation



Above: The MAVA Foundation, the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation at the signing of the Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems (DIMFE) in Marseille, France, September 2021.

### Brave and bold

MAVA Foundation has epitomised the brave and bold action that we, as foundations, all aspire to. As an early philanthropic investor in the circular economy, MAVA

paved the way for others, including Laudes Foundation, to come in. The foundation had the foresight to connect the dots across the economy, nature, and material use, and, as a result, seeded many initiatives which have since grown

into powerful accelerators of the circular economy.

**Leslie Johnston,**  
Laudes Foundation



## A big sister to smaller foundations

In West Africa, in the Mandingo region, the big sister, or the eldest daughter of a family is called N'körös Mousso. She is the one who leads the way and accompanies her younger brothers and sisters in their growth, setting an example and carrying their voices to higher levels.

In the field of environmental philanthropy, MAVA has been a big sister to many foundations, which have been able to grow and professionalise under her benevolent guidance. As MAVA retires, many of us can say: Thank you N'körös MAVA! We will continue your work!

**Ezra Ricci,**  
**Audemars-Watkins Foundation**



Right: Bee-eater birds in the Bijagós.



## Tackling root causes

When MAVA created Partners for a New Economy (P4NE) in 2015 with Oak and KR Foundations, it sent a strong message to our philanthropy community: we shall address the root causes of the crises and not only try to fix the symptoms with nature conservation, for example. The current economic system which treats nature and people as inexhaustible resources leads to unacceptable environmental, social and political impact. It is high time to promote new economic thinking and approaches that will impede capitalism from destroying the planet. Thank you MAVA for making P4NE the beacon of a systemic change philanthropy!

**Nicolas Krausz,**  
**Fondation Charles**  
**Léopold Mayer**



### Showcasing the potential of working in collaboration

My team and I have had the pleasure to work over many years with the staff and the management at MAVA – on the operations and capacity building side as well as in a number of donor collaborations. Working over many years with MAVA as a trusted partner located in the Suisse Romande has made it so much

more interesting and less lonely for us. We have mindmapped ideas together and brought some of them to life. MAVA has led in some areas and Oak in others, bringing together the diversity of their teams with their strengths and unique talents. The work MAVA and Oak have done together with others showcases the potential for philanthropic organisations working in collaboration to achieve impact that none of us can achieve alone. Although

MAVA's closing will be a big loss on many fronts, the incredible work they have done will continue to have tremendous impact, and the staff will carry forward the ethos of collaboration into other philanthropic foundations active in the region, thus strengthening the ecosystem of philanthropy.

**Vinit Rishi,**  
**Oak Foundation**

### Building a stronger civil society ecosystem

MAVA has been a cornerstone of the Mediterranean conservation sector, and leaves a legacy that is truly remarkable not only for its biodiversity achievements but also its impact on civil society and the landscape of conservation funding. MAVA's commitment to securing the development and sustainability of its grantees aligns with our own values of long-term, flexible support and is much-needed in the sector. By recognising the importance of strong local actors in a region where many NGOs face significant challenges, MAVA has without doubt contributed to a more resilient and effective conservation civil society. This is reflected particularly strongly in the significant contribution it has made to fostering additional funding opportunities for NGOs in the region. Through instigating innovative mechanisms like the Small-scale Initiatives Programme for North African Civil Society Organisations and Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust – both of which we



also now support – MAVA has thoughtfully laid the groundwork for life after it closes. While we are sad to see MAVA draw to an end, its legacy will be a far stronger civil society ecosystem, contributing to the

conservation of biodiversity in this unique hotspot long into the future.

**Duncan Wilson and Sophie Adwick,**  
**Sigrid Rausing Trust**



### An influence that is impossible to measure

MAVA's work is long-term, very long-term, and it is impossible to measure the influence it has had on our relationship with nature. Beyond the countless number of projects that have been supported, the numerous students, technicians, politicians, journalists, fishermen, farmers, and many more I'm forgetting, who have been trained,

the strength of MAVA has been to bring together a whole community of men and women invested with the same passion for nature, who have discussed for hours behind binoculars, around a good meal, who have confronted their opinions, who have been excited, confused and then reconciled. A whirlwind that was conducive to the emergence of new ideas, new approaches, new alliances, like so many small seeds whose fruits will

continue to be harvested for a long time to come.

**Julien Semelin,**  
**Cartier for Nature**



Above: The steering committee of the MAVA Outcome Action Plan on Conservation of Sea Turtles in the Mediterranean met in Istanbul in 2017 to discuss the implementation of a joint action plan.

### Setting a new standard for philanthropy

Long after its closure, MAVA will be remembered and referred to as a standard-setter. It will be so for its strategy and philanthropic model, characterised by a clear mission, vision and values throughout the organisation's setup and activities. One of MAVA's key features is its spend-down approach, which has produced directly and indirectly a very positive impact on the 'framing effect' that it has produced in the philanthropic space and

the development of its project portfolio. This is perhaps the most striking part of MAVA's 'business model': set the capacity building of its beneficiaries as a key priority for them to become autonomous and, in a way, self-sustainable to pursue their philanthropic missions in the long run. This is a scalable model: what better impact could be imagined for a donor foundation? Of course, MAVA did not do this alone. The quality of its management, culture and spirit, and the founder's vision have been cornerstones. Since the beginning, MAVA has been aware

that no foundation, whatever its size, can act as a solo player, and that partnerships are thus necessary between donors and public authorities, and between donors and beneficiaries. MAVA convincingly walked the talk and left us with an inspiring and stimulating philanthropic model.

**Henry Peter,**  
**Geneva Centre for Philanthropy**



## A groundbreaking systemic approach

Ahead of time, MAVA understood that looking at the root causes of issues is crucial in order to enable change. Therefore, MAVA's vision and impact strategy included a systemic approach which recognised the interconnectedness of issues and themes. For instance, MAVA did not shy away from challenging prevailing economic models and stressing the importance of governance, culture and values. The foundation went beyond looking at activities from a project perspective, instead it emphasised how to build skills, empower key actors and give them the means to collectively create a sustainable impact.

MAVA has shaped the philanthropic ecosystem within Switzerland and beyond. The foundation has inspired visions, activities, organisations and most of all – people. Hence, MAVA's legacy will be diffused and multiplied and will continue to nurture systemic change.

**Andrew Holland,**  
Stiftung Mercator Schweiz



Marine life in the Pakleni Islands, Croatia.



## More than a funder

Aspiring to be more than a funder; to become a critical friend of civil society organisations. At Adessium, we see this as a key role for grant-making foundations. That aspiration and attitude are the great legacies that MAVA leaves behind after it closes its doors. MAVA inspired us to think strategically about how to bring about change and how to build the societal power to move the needle on critical environmental issues.

MAVA's pioneering work to protect the Mediterranean Sea is a case in point. By building strong civil society organisations and seeking lasting conservation change through co-creation with essential stakeholders, MAVA has effectively built collaborations that work to protect and restore the rich biodiversity in the Mediterranean region for the benefit of both people and nature.

MAVA leaves behind a memorable legacy. We thank MAVA for setting a standard for philanthropy and for the excellent collaboration over the past years.

To MAVA staff, we say: until we meet again!

**Roger van Vliet – Chairman,**  
On behalf of the entire team  
at Adessium Foundation



## Honouring Mediterranean culture, preserving Mediterranean biodiversity

Twelve years of collaboration between the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and MAVA! After a few meetings, the relationship between our two organisations began to crystallise under the Murano glass chandeliers of the Palazzo Zorzi in Venice, where UNESCO was hosting us. It was the first meeting of what was to become our informal Mediterranean Donors' Group.

Since then, we have met often, trying each year to take the time to take a step aside, to think about how we can have more impact, together, for the preservation of Mediterranean biodiversity.

Each time, of course, we did not forget to honour Mediterranean culture, well aware that conviviality contributes to the quality of the reflection.

I remember a lot of laughter, beautiful discussions along hiking trails, and lively debates that went on long after the desserts had disappeared from the table!

Today, MAVA is leaving us, but the group continues to meet, and even to grow. It will remain, I hope, one of the legacies of the Foundation in our region for a long time.

**Pierre Carret,**  
Critical Ecosystem  
Partnership Fund



## Unafraid to think big

When I think of European foundations who understand the 'big picture' enough to think big, MAVA is always at the top of the list. Unfortunately, that list is very short. The result is that Oak and MAVA have ended up working together on big, complicated and innovative solutions to the problems that face us all. Whether it is the Plastic Solutions Fund, the Partners for a New Economy, or the Global Commons Alliance, MAVA has been at the forefront, willing to take risks. As a great group of people and an institution, you will be sorely missed.

**Kristian Parker,**  
Oak Foundation



Left: Giant devil ray (*Mobula mobular*), photographed near Pico Island, Azores archipelago.



06

REFLECTIONS AND  
HOPES







# REFLECTIONS AND HOPES: PARTING WORDS FROM ANDRÉ HOFFMANN

**T**he foundation’s closure has given me the opportunity to reflect on the past three decades, as well as to look ahead and envision what the future might look like for conservation and those committed to it without MAVA’s presence.

MAVA’s achievements have honoured the memory of my father. We executed his vision and used his methods; the resulting impact was remarkable. The combined efforts of my father and our foundation also helped to bring about great changes in the perception of nature.

Thirty years ago, the fact that our consumption patterns were endangering nature, and by extension humanity, was always discounted rather quickly. Today, the realisation that nature is indispensable to life on Earth is mainstream and it’s widely recognised that we will not survive very long if our natural system is pushed too far.

However, I also believe that the idea that only philanthropy can save nature, that we can create recurrent cash flows towards nature only through philanthropy, is a doomed model. Traditional philanthropy, particularly in conservation, has

not fully fulfilled its mission. Nature is struggling. MAVA, its peers and partners have certainly helped ease its suffering and prolong the situation, but we haven’t solved the problem.

The amount of money that philanthropy commits to the environment is several billion Swiss francs each year, which is incredible and impactful, but also not enough to solve the enormous challenges facing the natural world. We need to have a systemic change that is not only based on the realisation of impact, but also the demonstration of the opportunity that nature provides. If the aim is sustainability, we cannot rely on people’s charity or philanthropy, so we need to create recurrent, consistent cash flows for nature and continue to explore innovative sustainable funding mechanisms for conservation that build on the examples MAVA and our partners have developed.

Whilst the future will certainly be challenging, there are many reasons for optimism. There’s an increasing understanding, both in conservation circles and the business community, that we must protect nature not only because nature is beautiful, but also because there is a serious practical interest for humanity in its preservation. The interconnectedness of people and nature and the immense potential of nature-based solutions are becoming factors in boardroom and

government office decision-making all over the world. More people are understanding that you do not keep a pocket of the Amazon rainforest just because you want to protect the forest, you also do it because if we lose it we’ll have problems – from temperature spikes to disruption of rainfall – that affect us all, no matter where we live.

There is also a resilient, committed community of conservationists determined to face these challenges. This is what I see as MAVA’s ultimate legacy – the tens of thousands of people who have been empowered over the years thanks to their connections with us or our partners, and especially the upcoming generation of leaders we helped bloom to their full potential. When I look back at our mission and what we wanted to achieve, to conserve biodiversity for the benefit of people and nature by funding, mobilising and strengthening our partners and the conservation community, I can say we achieved it.

**André Hoffmann**  
MAVA President



07

APPENDICES,  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS &

THANKS





# THE FOUNDATION’S PARTNERS OVER THE YEARS

Whilst we’re proud of all the achievements we have contributed to, the true credit must go to our partners – we simply facilitated their impact. We would like to express our gratitude to all our partners for their unfailing engagement, collaboration and dedication throughout the years.

All our partners are named below. This list encompasses all MAVA's direct partners, but we acknowledge all the impactful work done by indirect partners too (such as those sub-contracted by direct partners) and all the members of the conservation community we had the honour of collaborating with during our lifespan.

## Partners

- A Rocha Lebanon
  - Acumen Academy
  - African Leadership University (ALU)
  - African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)
  - Agroscope
  - Al-Shouf Cedar Society (ACS)
  - Alliance des Alpes
  - Alliance Vaudoise pour la Nature
  - Altenburg & Wymenga
  - Amnesty International Suisse
  - Antal Festetics, Professor
  - Antoine Guisan, Doctor
  - Arbeitsgruppe Piz Vizan
  - Arboretum du Vallon de l'Aubonne
  - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – Eidikos Logariasmos Kondilion Erevnas
  - Ashoka UK
  - Asity Madagascar (BirdLife Madagascar)
  - Asociación Eco-Unión
  - Associação Lantuna
  - Associação Natureza Portugal (ANP)
  - Associação para a Defesa do Ambiente e Desenvolvimento (ADAD)
  - Associação para a Investigação e Desenvolvimento de Ciências (FCiências.ID)
  - Associação Projecto Vitó
  - Associação Projeto Biodiversidade
  - Asociación Trashumancia y Naturaleza (TyN)
- Association Alpes Vivantes
  - Association Beyond Plastic Med (BeMed)
  - Association BIOM (BirdLife Croatia)
  - Association Broye Source de Vie
  - Association de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources (AGIR)
  - Association de Vullierens
  - Association des Amis de la Salamandre
  - Association des Pêcheurs de la Communauté Rurale de Mangagoulack (APCRM)
  - Association du Rallye du Chablais
  - Association Ecovillages
  - Association Flamants Roses du Banc d'Arguin (FROBA)
  - Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development (Sunce)
  - Association for Sustainable and Responsible Investment in Asia (ASrIA)
  - Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa (APJM)
  - Association InTent
  - Association Internationale des Forêts Méditerranéennes (AIFM)
  - Association J'aime ma Planète
  - Association Jorat, Parc Naturel
  - Association Jorat, Une Terre à Vivre au Quotidien (JUTAVAQ)
  - Association Les Amis des Marais du Vigueirat (AMV)
  - Association Liber Temporis Machinae
  - Association Limosa
- Association MedPAN
  - Association Metropole Suisse
  - Association Notre Grand Bleu
  - Association OUI à la stratégie énergétique 2050
  - Association pour la Sauvegarde du Léman
  - Association pour le Cheval de Przewalski (TAKH)
  - Association Pro-Pandion
  - Association Suisse Pro Petite Camargue Alsacienne
  - Association Truite-Léman
  - Associazione Paesaggio Bosco Gurin
  - Associazzone Parc Adula
  - B Lab Switzerland
  - BACoMaB Trust Fund
  - Basel Zoo
  - Basic Roots
  - Better Nature
  - Big Tent Foundation
  - Bios Cabo Verde (Bios.CV)
  - Biosfera Cabo Verde
  - BirdLife Cyprus
  - BirdLife International
  - BirdLife Malta
  - BirdLife Österreich
  - BirdLife Switzerland (ASPO/SVS)
  - Black Vulture Conservation Foundation (BVCF)
  - Blue Finance – Economics of Coral Reef Ecosystems (ECRE)
  - BlueSeeds

- Bright Blue
  - Bürgerinitiative Unzmarkt-Frauenburg
  - Butterfly Conservation Europe
  - Cabo Verde Natura 2000
  - Capitals Coalition
  - Caribaea Initiative
  - Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)
  - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) de Montpellier
  - Centre Ornithologique Rhône-Alpes
  - Centre Régional d'Etudes Biologiques et Sociales (France)
  - Centro de Investigação Pesqueira Aplicada (CIPA – Guinea-Bissau)
  - Cercle Ornithologique de Lausanne
  - Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF)
  - Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs)
  - CHEM Trust
  - ChemSec
  - Chimbo Foundation
  - Ciconia Stiftung
  - Cigogne Suisse
  - CIHEAM, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICh)
  - CIPRA International
  - Circle Economy Switzerland
  - Clarmondial AG
  - Climate & Sustainability
  - Climate-KIC Holding B.V.
  - Club Alpin Suisse
  - Club of Rome
  - Comité d'action Galmiz
  - Comité du Parc Jurassien Vaudois
  - Comité Français de l'UICN
  - Commission des réserves forestières de Montricher
  - Commission Sous-Régionale des Pêches (CSRP)
  - Committee Yes to a Green Economy
  - Common Purpose
  - Commune de Montricher
  - Congrex Switzerland Ltd
  - Conservation Finance Alliance (CFA)
  - Conservation International (CI)
  - Conservation Without Borders
  - Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)
  - Coöperative Circle Economy U.A.
  - Cosima Tegetmeyer
- Council on Economic Policies (CEP)
  - Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation Institute
  - Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
  - Croatian Herpetological Society (HYLA)
  - Cybelle Planète
  - CZIP, BirdLife Montenegro
  - Dalberg SA
  - Daniel Aubort
  - Daniel Chérix, Professor
  - Danube Biosphere Reserve
  - DEKAMER
  - Der Verband für nachhaltiges Wirtschaften (öbu)
  - Direction des Aires Protégées et du Littoral (DAPL – Mauritania)
  - Direction des Parcs Nationaux (Senegal)
  - DiversEarth
  - Doğa Derneği
  - Društvo Ekologi brez meja (Ecologists Without Borders)
  - ECA Watch
  - EcoAlbania
  - Ecological Club Danube
  - ECOS AG
  - Ellen MacArthur Foundation
  - Empiricon AG
  - Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre (ENALIA)
  - Ente Regionale per lo Sviluppo del Locarnese e Vallemaggia
  - Entreprise de Correction Fluviale du Nozon
  - Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)
  - Eppel Sustainability
  - État de Vaud, Direction générale de l'environnement, Division Biodiversité et Paysage (DGE-BIODIV)
  - EuroNatur
  - Europa Forum Luzern
  - European Climate Foundation (ECF)
  - European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
  - European Pond Conservation Network (EPCN)
  - Ex'Tax Project
  - Fairshare Educational Foundation (trading as ShareAction)
  - Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE)
- Finance Watch
  - Fish2Fork
  - Fondation Bios / Association Andalus
  - Fondation Changins
  - Fondation des Grangettes
  - Fondation du Bois de Chênes
  - Fondation du parc zoologique La Garenne
  - Fondation Hainard
  - Fondation Hoffmann
  - Fondation Internationale du Banc d'Arguin (FIBA)
  - Fondation Jan Michalski pour l'écriture et la littérature
  - Fondation Les Moulins de Rivaz
  - Fondation pour l'étude des Relations Internationales et du Développement, Genève
  - Fondation pour l'Université de Lausanne
  - Fondation pour la Conservation du Gypaète
  - Fondation suisse pour le Développement Durable (sanu durabilitas)
  - Fondation pour les Parcs et Réserves de Côte d'Ivoire
  - Fondation ProValat
  - Fondation Succow
  - Fondation Suisse d'Education pour l'Environnement (FEE)
  - Food Packaging Forum Foundation (FPF)
  - Foraus – Swiss Forum on Foreign Policy
  - Förderkreis BIOTOPIA Naturkundemuseum Bayern e.V.
  - Forever Costa Rica Association (FCRA)
  - Forschungsinstitut für biologischen Landbau (FiBL)
  - Forum Biodiversité Suisse
  - Forum Ökologisch-Soziale Marktwirtschaft e.V.
  - Foundation for Global Sustainability (FFGS)
  - Foundation of the University of Zurich
  - Friends of the Earth Europe
  - Fundação BioGuiné (FBG)
  - Fundação Maio Biodiversidade (FMB)
  - Fundação Tartaruga
  - Fundación Global Nature (FGN)
  - Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre (FNYH)
  - Fundación para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad (CBD-Hábitat)
  - Fundatia Conservation Carpathia
  - Fundaziun Pro Terra Engiadina



- Fundaziun Capricorn
- Funders for Fair Trade
- Fundo Brasileiro para Biodiversidade (Funbio)
- Gemeinde Samedan
- Gemeinden im Neckertal
- General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
- Global Canopy Foundation
- Global Diversity Foundation (GDF)
- Global Footprint Network (GFN)
- Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)
- Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation (GIB)
- Global Infrastructure Institute
- Global Legislators Organisation (GLOBE)
- Global Penguin Society (GPS)
- Global Sustainability Trust
- GOB Menorca
- Goetheanum Dornach
- Grande Cariçaie
- Green Alliance
- Green Economy Coalition
- GreenCape Sector Development Agency
- Greenlight Association
- Greifensee-Stiftung
- GRID-Arendal
- Groupe 3.21
- Groupe d'études faunistiques de Jaman (GEFJ)
- Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur les Vertébrés (GRIVE)
- Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques (GRET)
- Groupement d'Intérêt Scientifique pour les Mammifères Marins de Méditerranée (GIS3M)
- Grün Stadt Zürich
- Grupo de Estudos de Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente (GEOTA)
- Hannah Cubaynes
- Hans Salzmann
- Heinrich Boell Foundation
- Hellenic Center for Marine Research (HCMR)
- Hellenic Institute of Speoleogical Research (HISR)
- Hellenic Ornithological Society (BirdLife Greece)

- Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN)
- Hochschule für Technik Rapperswil (HSR)
- ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability e.V.
- Impact Hub Geneva–Lausanne
- Impact Hub GmbH
- Impact Hub Switzerland Association
- Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
- InfluenceMap CIC
- Infrass AG
- Initiative pour les Petites îles de Méditerranée (Initiative PIM)
- Institut de la Francophonie pour le Développement Durable (IFDD)
- Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)
- Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales (IDDRI)
- Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Mer (ISSM)
- Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)
- Instituto da Biodiversidade e das Áreas Protegidas (IBAP)
- Inter Pares
- International Conservation Caucus Foundation
- International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, European Regional Group (IFOAM EU)
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Investor Watch Ltd
- IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
- IUCN Guinea–Bissau
- IUCN Mauritania
- IUCN Programme Office for South–Eastern Europe (IUCN SEE)
- IUCN Programme on African Protected Areas & Conservation (PAPACO)

- IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO)
- IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA)
- Jenifer Altman Foundation
- Judith Zbinden, Doctor
- KARCH: Centre de Coordination pour la Protection des Amphibiens et des Reptiles de Suisse
- Klaus Ewald, Professor
- Konrad Lorenz Stiftung
- KORA Stiftung
- Landesmuseum Zurich
- Le Balkan
- Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli (LIPU–BirdLife Italy)
- Les Editions de la Salamandre Sarl
- Liechtensteinische Gesellschaft für Umweltschutz (LGU)
- Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO – BirdLife France)
- Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO) – Antenne Grands Causses
- Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE)
- Luc Hoffmann Institute
- Lukas Indermaur
- LUMA & cetera Fondation
- LX Filmes
- Maarten Bijleveld van Lexmond, Doctor
- Marcelo de Camargo Furtado
- Mark Halle
- Maisenbacher Magic projects
- Maison de la Rivière
- Marianne Haahr
- Marilles Foundation
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
- Material Economics Sverige AB
- Maumary Lionel and Vallotton Laurent
- Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (MEDASSET)
- Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO–ECSDE)
- Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropolos (MedINA)
- Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet)
- MEDSEA Foundation
- Michael Succow Foundation
- Ministère de l'Environnement et du

- Développement Durable (Mauritanie)
- Monitoring Institute for Rare Breeds and Seeds in Europe
- Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association (MBLA)
- Mowgli Mentoring
- National Marine Park of Zakynthos (NMPZ)
- National Research Center (Palestine)
- Nationalpark Oberoesterreichische Kalkalpen GmbH
- Natural Justice
- Natural Resources Defense Council Inc. (NRDC)
- Nature Mauritania
- Nature Network Fund
- Nature Trust Malta
- Nature–Communautés–Développement (NCD – BirdLife Senegal)
- NatureFinance (formerly Finance for Biodiversity – F4B)
- Nébédai
- Neue Zürcher Zeitung AG
- New Economics Foundation
- New Venture Fund
- Noé
- North Cyprus Society for Protection of Turtles (SPOT)
- Nos Oiseaux
- Ö+L Büro Für Ökologie und Landschaft
- Ocean Conservancy
- Oceana
- Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (France)
- OIKOS Istituto
- ONG Palmeirinha
- Opération Canopée
- ORCA Production SA
- Organisation for Orphan Projects
- Organisation pour la Protection des Alpes (OPPAL)
- Ornithologia Stiftung Basel
- Palestine Wildlife Society (PWLS)
- Parc National du Banc d'Arguin (PNBA)
- Parc National du Diawling
- Parc Naturel Régional de Camargue
- Parc Naturel Régional Gruyère Pays–d'Enhaut
- Parc Naturel Régional Jura Vaudois
- Parco Nazionale del Locarnese

- Partenariat Régional pour la Conservation de la zone Côtière et Marine (PRCM)
- Partners for a New Economy (P4NE)
- Peace Parks Foundation
- Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)
- Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea – formerly EFC)
- Photographes pour la Planète
- Plan Bleu
- PlantLife International
- Plastics Solutions Fund
- Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust (PONT)
- Preventable Surprises
- Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation
- Priority Actions Programme/Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC)
- Pro Natura
- Progetto Lince Italia
- Projekte Ökologie Landwirtschaft (Schweiz)
- ProPark Foundation
- ProSea
- Prozirkula
- PUSCH
- Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (RAC/SPA)
- Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC)
- Regione Locarnese et Vallemaggia (RLVM)
- Réseau Action Climat – France
- Réseau Régional d'Aires Marines Protégées en Afrique de l'Ouest (RAMPAO)
- Resilient Foundation
- Reto Soler
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ)
- Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature – Jordan (RSCN)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Nature – Bhutan (RSPN – BirdLife Bhutan)
- Rytec AG
- Salzburg Global Seminar
- SAVE Foundation
- Schmetterlings – Forum Zürich
- Schweizerische Ausbildungsstätte für Natur – und Umweltschutz – SANU

- Schweizerische Greina–Stiftung (SGS)
- Schweizerische Vogelwarte
- Schweizerischer Forstverein
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Seas at Risk
- Silverback Films Limited
- SILVIVA Foundation
- Simon Zadek
- Slowfood
- Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO – BirdLife Spain)
- Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA – BirdLife Portugal)
- Société Coopérative de l'Asile du Marchairuz
- Société d'Etudes Ornithologiques de France (SEOF)
- Society for Territorial and Environmental Prosperity (STEP)
- Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL – BirdLife Lebanon)
- Society for the Protection of Nature Israel (BirdLife Israel)
- Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP)
- Sofies SA
- Southern African College
- Stichting Birdlife Europe
- Stichting Global Flyway Network
- Stichting Metabolic Institute
- Stichting Transhumance & Natuur
- Stiftung Bildungswerkstatt Bergwald
- Stiftung Frauenwinkel
- Stiftung für nachhaltige Landwirtschaft – Schweiz (SNL)
- Stiftung Landschaftsschutz Schweiz (SL–FP)
- Stiftung Pro Bartgeier
- Surfrider Foundation Europe
- Sustainable Digital Finance Alliance (formerly Green Digital Finance Alliance)
- Sustainable Finance Geneva (SFG)
- Swiss Association for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas (AGRIDEA)
- Swiss Economic Forum (SEF)
- Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL)
- Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG)
- Swisscleantech
- SYSTEMIQ Ltd



- Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary
- Tamedia Publications Romandes
- Teenergy Productions
- Terra Cypria, The Cyprus Conservation Foundation
- Terroir et Cultures
- Tethys Research Institute
- The Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University
- The Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Cambridge
- The Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford
- The Conservation Collective
- The European Conservation Coaches Network (CCNet Europe)
- The MedFund
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Pew Charitable Trusts
- The Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece (ARCHELON)
- The Value Web
- Third Generation Environmentalism (E3G)
- Tiniguena
- Topten International Services (TIS)
- Tour du Valat
- Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group (IUCN)
- Trinationales Umweltzentrum
- Tropical Biology Association Ltd
- Turtle Foundation
- Ukrainian Green Wave Ecological Club
- Underwater Research Society (SAD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Property Investments Limited
- University of Aveiro
- University of Avignon
- University of Barcelona
- University of Basel
- University of Bern
- University of British Columbia
- University of Cabo Verde (Department of Engineering and Marine Science)
- University of Cambridge
- University of Exeter
- University of Groningen
- University of Lausanne
- University of Lisboa
- University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU)
- University of New York
- University of Vienna
- University of Vigo
- University of Zurich
- Verein Beirat NATUR
- Verein Parc Adula
- Verein Pro Riet Rheintal
- Verein Pro Wiesenweihe
- Verein Sauberes Wasser für alle
- Vertigo Lab
- Vision Landwirtschaft
- VivaRiva
- Vivid Economics Ltd
- Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF)
- Wade & Co
- Waldwirtschaftverband beider Basel und Basellandschaftlicher Natur- und Vogelschutzverein
- Wässermatten Stiftung
- Wasserwelten Göschenen
- Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)
- WaterBear
- WESPO Inc, DBA CEA Consulting
- Wetlands International
- Wetlands International Africa
- Whitley Fund for Nature
- Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF)
- Wild Foundation
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Wildlife Consulting
- Wildscreen
- WIN Wieselnetz

- World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)
- World Business Council For Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
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- WWF West Africa Marine Programme (WAMPO ex–WAMER)
- Yolda Initiative
- Z/Yen Group Limited
- Zero Waste Europe
- ZOE, the Institute for Future–Fit Economies

# OUR TEAM AND BOARD

We would like to express our deep recognition to all the MAVA board and team members for their support and inspiration, sometimes in the background but equally important, enabling MAVA to accomplish its mission to conserve biodiversity for people and nature.

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# FRIENDS OF MAVA

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- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- The World Bank
- TroisDeuxUn
- UBS
- University of Portsmouth
- Voices That Count
- Wild Wonders of Europe
- WISE
- Yona Lee SA
- Yves Junod



# FURTHER READING

If you would like to read more about MAVA, a selection of its learning products and publications remain available on MAVA's legacy website.

These include reflections on its experiences, its guidance on sunsetting a foundation, white papers on a range of topics and a series of its blogs.

- A fruitful OD partnership: our retrospective of the long collaboration between MedPAN & MAVA
- Be an octopus: reflections from an engaged donor
- Care for those who care for the planet: grantmaking for staff development
- Conservation Learning Initiative: evidence-based learning to improve conservation impact
- How to finance conservation sustainably beyond project support / granting
- Learning to let go: Decision-making for foundations
- Meaning or money: what do we value?
- Merging for impact: radically rethinking how we deliver impact
- Not if but how: troubleshooting in projects
- Our journey in philanthropy: lessons from three decades of grant-making at MAVA
- Strategic partnerships: MAVA's approach to scaling up conservation impact
- Tips of the triangle: exploring three-way partnerships for organisational development
- Using core values to honor the founder's vision while not creating a mausoleum
- What lies beyond financial outcomes: a donor's perspective on supporting fundraising
- Why investing in leadership development matters

All these publications are available on MAVA's legacy website:  
[www.mava-foundation.org](http://www.mava-foundation.org)





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*This book recounts the history and philosophy of the MAVA Foundation and pays tribute to the invaluable work accomplished by its partners over its lifetime.*

*MAVA was founded by Dr Luc Hoffmann in 1994 to support the conservation of biodiversity, and was later led by his son André.*

*The foundation was a key funder in the conservation field and had worked with over 500 partners by the time of its closure in 2022. This book tells a small selection of its partners' stories, alongside MAVA's own.*