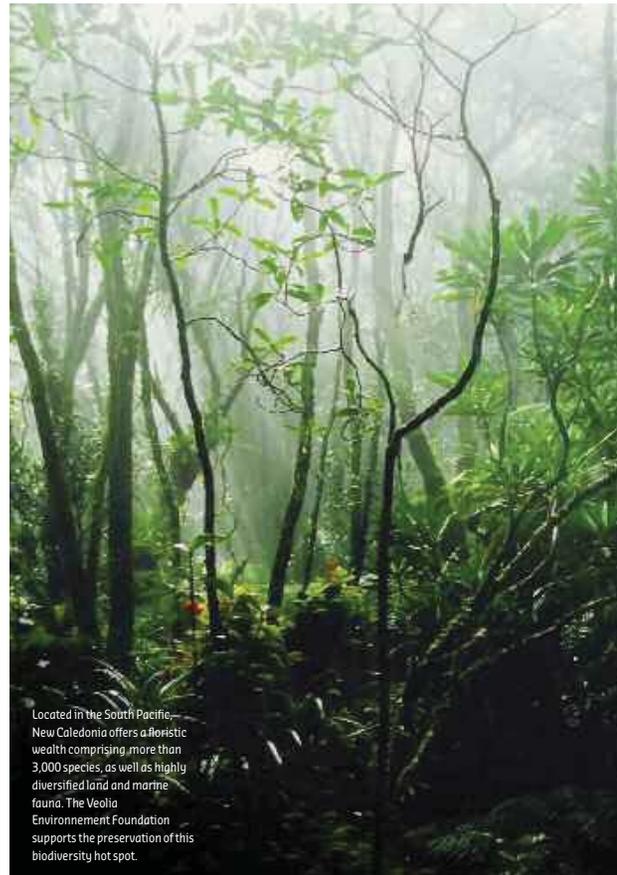




Veolia Environnement  
Foundation

# Operational approach

Environmental conservation ranks alongside outreach and workforce development as one of the Foundation's three major areas of involvement. Over the past seven years, the Foundation has supported 169 conservation projects ranging from highly localized initiatives to actions of international scope.



Located in the South Pacific, New Caledonia offers a floristic wealth comprising more than 3,000 species, as well as highly diversified land and marine fauna. The Veolia Environnement Foundation supports the preservation of this biodiversity hot spot.



Twenty-two scientists representing a variety of disciplines and ten different countries take turns aboard the Tara expedition to cover more than a dozen fields of basic research. This is another project supported by the Veolia Environnement Foundation.



Exoskeletons of some coccolithophores (plankton) under an electron microscope. These minuscule marine



organisms utilize the calcium carbonate dissolved in the ocean to manufacture their shells. Like corals and



foraminifers, they play a key role in global ecology and have been in existence for roughly 200 million years.



Today, they are threatened by the increasing acidity (acidification) of ocean waters.

*"Forests are the primary example of services that Nature provides to humans. Preserving them is vital for the future of agriculture and therefore, for the future of the world's food supply. They play a major role in regulating available water and are also a source of subsistence resources that benefit the world's poorest people, most of whom live adjacent to them."* Pavlan Sukdhev<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Indian economist and banker, founder of the first green accounting system for India and an eminent member of the supervisory council of Conservation Action Trust, an Indian environmental protection organization.

“ Since the Foundation was first established in 2004, its commitment to the protection of biodiversity has been one of its priority themes, which is consistent with the company's overall strategy,” points out Thierry Vandeveldé, its Executive Officer, who emphasizes that “no project is too small<sup>(1)</sup>.” Ranging from high localized projects concerned with best practices, such as the “Honey bank” project in France, to ambitious initiatives

like the preservation of reefs off the coast of Brazil, each project is encouraged by an aid grant. But the main means of encouragement is through the donation of skills, and that is where the company's employees play their part by sharing their know-how. The selection process for these large-scale programs is clearly defined: “Working closely with our partners, we give precedence to an operational approach by mobilizing our fields of know-how. To do so, we are careful about the

caliber of the projects we select: rigorous evaluation of inventories, effectiveness of conservation, project promotion through awareness-building, and for major programs, their international dimension,” he adds.

#### Evaluation and conservation

The French Southern and Antarctic Lands (TAAF) harbor one of the most spectacular examples of marine biodiversity: the Îles Éparses (Scattered Islands) in the Mozambique Channel. For its

project there, the Foundation is mobilizing the teams of Veolia Environmental Services. The expertise of this division is needed to restore the original quality of one of the islands, Juan de Nova, by removing all of the hazardous industrial waste buried there over the past three decades. With subsequent development phases, Juan de Nova should also become a sanctuary and biodiversity observatory available to the international scientific community.

#### Educate the public

“Public awareness programs such as the Children's Gallery opening in June 2010 within the framework of the ongoing educational activities of the Paris Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, are a persuasive argument in favor of biodiversity,” adds the Executive Officer. “Every day, an audience composed of international families comes to admire the scenography of the scientific exhibits.” Another initiative is the Environmental Book Prize (see page 24),

established in 2006 and steadily gaining in prestige. Each year, a Prize and a Young Adult Prize are awarded to ensure that biodiversity is addressed by variety of writing styles and readerships.

#### Major programs

The Tara expedition, of which the Veolia Foundation is one of the leading sponsors (see *Planète No. 26*), is mobilizing more than a hundred scientists around the world. Over the coming decade, the expedition will establish the

first global inventory of marine plankton. These new sources of data, intended for international laboratories, hold promise for innovative solutions in the frontier area of measuring the ecological quality of natural habitats and water masses. “Being a partner of focal international programs thus enables us to address the various facets of environmental preservation and to make man a central component of restoration programs, a sine qua non for their sustainability.

That's why our priority goes to projects devoted to hot spots<sup>(2)</sup>,” says Vandeveldé. “The essential involvement of sponsors as well as the development of long-term partnerships also help us to better structure the work of our Foundation,” he concludes. ■

(1) To learn more: <http://www.fondation.veolia.com/en/actions/projects/>  
(2) Areas containing at least 1,500 species of vascular plants, or 0.5% of those known, and having already lost 70% of their primary vegetation compared to their original condition, are considered as biodiversity hot spots, which are constantly reassessed and updated.