



Call for Letters of Inquiry East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

This call is open to biodiversity conservation projects implemented by civil society in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the islands region of Papua New Guinea

This call is open from 8 September to 25 October 2017

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in its role as the regional implementation team (RIT) for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) in the East Melanesian Islands (EMI) Biodiversity Hotspot is now inviting letters of inquiry (LOIs) from civil society organizations, for large and small grant projects in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the islands region of Papua New Guinea. Please read the information below for further details on CEPF's investment in the EMI hotspot and for details of how to apply for a grant.

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is designed to safeguard Earth's biologically richest and most threatened regions, known as biodiversity hotspots. CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society plays a critical role in achieving biodiversity conservation outcomes.

Background

CEPF's niche for investment in the East Melanesian Islands was formulated through a participatory process that engaged civil society, donor and governmental stakeholders throughout the region. The results of this process and the eight-year (2013-2021) strategy that CEPF has identified for supporting biodiversity conservation in the region are outlined in the Ecosystem Profile. Five strategic directions were identified, covering 20 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in the three countries that are eligible for CEPF support, and addressing threats to 48 priority species. The CEPF investment strategy supports biodiversity conservation in ways that deliver significant, meaningful benefits to local communities, while making a sustained contribution to the development of local, national and regional capacity for conservation.

It is essential that applicants familiarize themselves with the investment strategy for the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot, which is contained within the [ecosystem profile](#) (3.9 MB).

Applicants are advised to carefully review other references available on the CEPF and IUCN Oceania websites when preparing their LOIs, specifically:

- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [How to apply](#)
- [Tips for getting your grant funded](#)
- [CEPF projects database](#)
- [CEPF safeguard policies](#)

Please note that preference will be given to projects that are the closest fit to the investment strategy and

demonstrate a leading role for local civil society organizations. IUCN and CEPF particularly welcome applications from local and grassroots organizations (for example community groups, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions and private companies). Individuals are encouraged to work with civil society organizations to develop applications, rather than to apply directly. Anyone who is uncertain of their eligibility to apply for CEPF funding should contact the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org.

Scope of Call

This call covers the EMI hotspot of Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the islands region of Papua New Guinea.

Applicants are now invited to submit LOIs for projects that will contribute to CEPF's strategy for East Melanesia, building on current and past CEPF investments in the region, and focusing on the strategic directions and investment priorities outlined below. All proposals should demonstrate direct and concrete conservation results which contribute to the priorities outlined in this call.

Strategic Direction 1. Empower local communities to protect and manage globally significant biodiversity at priority Key Biodiversity Areas under-served by current conservation efforts

Applicants are reminded to familiarize themselves with the priority key biodiversity areas for investment, which are presented on pages 164 and 165 of the [EMI ecosystem profile](#) (3.9 MB).

1.3 Support local communities to design and implement locally relevant conservation actions that respond to major threats at priority sites.

- Proposals should demonstrate dialogue, stakeholder consultations, community engagement and priorities, technical assistance assessments, and clear and simple management planning.

Proposals are particularly encouraged that:

-build on previous planning and baseline work carried out in CEPF's priority sites under Investment Priorities 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1

-focus on previously under-represented sites such as Marovo Kavachi and East Makira in Solomon Islands, and Cape St George in PNG

1.4 Demonstrate conservation incentives (eco-tourism, payments for ecosystem services, conservation agreements etc.) at priority sites.

- Proposals must demonstrate a clear link between livelihood benefits and conservation goals.
- Proposals should take into consideration the sustainability and possible replication of successful approaches, for example, through sustainable financing mechanisms.

Proposals focusing on activities that assess the feasibility of conservation incentives in priority sites across the hotspot are encouraged

Strategic Direction 2. Integrate biodiversity conservation into local land-use and development planning

2.1 Conduct participatory ownership and tenure mapping of resources within customary lands at priority sites.

- Proposals should aim to clarify ownership and tenure arrangements over natural resources within customary lands at priority sites, so that community-based conservation efforts can stand up to incompatible development and land-use decisions, such as expansion of commercial logging, plantations or mining.

Proposals are encouraged from CEPF Priority Sites across the Hotspot

2.2 Provide legal training and support to communities for effective enforcement of environmental protection regulations.

- Proposals that aim to support the provision of training and outreach to communities affected by

logging, mining, commercial agriculture and other development projects incompatible with the goal of biodiversity conservation are encouraged.

- Proposals should ensure that communities understand due process in environmental licensing for development projects, and have access to legal redress if it is not followed.

2.3 Explore partnerships with private companies to promote sustainable development through better environmental and social practices in key natural resources sectors.

- Proposals should support civil society organizations to explore and develop partnerships with private companies operating in the key natural resources sectors of forestry, fisheries, agriculture, mining and energy to develop and pilot better environmental and social management practices.

Strategic Direction 3. Safeguard priority globally threatened species by addressing major threats and information gaps

Applicants are reminded to familiarize themselves with the 48 priority species for investment, which are outlined on page 170 of the [EMI ecosystem profile](#) (3.9 MB). ***Proposals that build on previously funded work, for example under Investment Priority 3.1, 3.2 or under Strategic Direction 1, are particularly encouraged.***

3.2 Develop, implement and monitor species recovery plans for species most at risk, where their status and distribution are known.

- Proposals should aim to implement and monitor conservation actions, and to develop recovery plans for priority species if they do not already exist, and if there is a clear commitment to turn planning into action by local stakeholders.

3.3 Introduce science-based harvest management of priority species important to local food security.

- Proposals should aim to establish sustainable yields for priority species *where appropriate to do so*, develop science-based harvesting plans, and integrate such sustainable harvesting approaches into community-based species management plans. Research into sustainable yields and harvesting practices will only be eligible for support as part of projects that lead to the development *and introduction* of science-based harvesting plans.

Strategic Direction 4. Increase local, national and regional capacity to conserve biodiversity through catalyzing civil society partnerships

Priority will be given to those local and regional organizations that play a strategic role in achieving CEPF conservation outcomes. ***Proposals that aim to strengthen existing partnerships throughout EMI are encouraged.***

4.1 Strengthen the capacity of local and national civil society organizations in financial management, project management and organizational governance.

- Proposals should provide capacity building to local and national organizations within their formal or informal partnerships and networks, which may include training and mentoring in financial management, project management or development of appropriate governance arrangements.
- Proposals should seek to develop and implement financial sustainability plans to diversify their funding sources to reduce dependence on CEPF and other short-term grants.

Proposals focusing on building the capacity of strategically aligned civil society organizations working in the priority sites in Vanuatu and PNG are particularly encouraged

4.3 Strengthen civil society capacity in conservation management, science and leadership through short-term training courses at domestic institutions

- Proposals should involve short-term courses that focus on topics such as conservation management, conservation science and/or leadership and project management training, and should demonstrate a clear commitment to institutional and financial sustainability.

Proposals building upon projects previously funded by CEPF (such as the Pacific Islands Community Co-management Course and the University of Queensland's Rangers course in Solomon Islands) to promote institutional and financial sustainability are encouraged.

Eligibility

Non-governmental organizations, community groups, private enterprises, universities and other civil society applicants may apply for funding. Organizations must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions. Applications from organizations that propose to build capacity of local civil society and community groups are particularly encouraged. Projects must be located within the sites and countries identified in the ecosystem profile.

Government owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can demonstrate that the enterprise or institution can fulfil the following criteria:

- i. is a legal personality independent of any government agency or actor;
- ii. the authority to apply for and receive private funds; and
- iii. may not assert a claim of sovereign immunity.

Anyone who is uncertain of their eligibility or likelihood of receiving funding from CEPF should contact the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org for clarification.

Grants cannot be used for the following activities: (i) purchase of land; (ii) removal or alteration of any physical cultural property (including those with archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious or unique natural values); (iii) relocation of people or any other form of involuntary resettlement; or (iv) capitalization of trust funds. All activities must comply with CEPF's [social and environmental safeguard policies](#).

Evaluation Criteria

The CEPF Secretariat, the regional implementation team (RIT) and the national Technical Advisory Groups in each country will be looking for the following components when reviewing a CEPF letter of inquiry:

1. Strategic importance to CEPF: Will the results of this project contribute to achieving the conservation priorities articulated in the CEPF Ecosystem Profile for the East Melanesian Islands? How will the project contribute to a specific investment priority and target within the ecosystem profile and logical framework? How will the proposed work meet specific and justified needs in the KBA, country, or hotspot?
2. Ability of project to achieve conservation results: Are the objectives, approach / strategies and deliverables well thought out and comprehensive? Are the project objectives, approach/ strategies and proposed deliverables aligned to achieving strategic conservation results?
3. Applicant capabilities: Does the applicant have the capacity and comparative advantage (skills, knowledge, experience, relationships and credibility with local stakeholders) to successfully implement the project? Is permission required for the project to proceed? If yes, are there any risks in the project obtaining permission?
4. Building EMI civil society capacity: Does the project contribute to CEPF's priority to empower East Melanesian civil society organizations, including local community organizations and indigenous groups?
5. Participation: Does the project incorporate stakeholder consultation in design and participation in implementation to build local ownership, buy-in and capacity? Were key stakeholders, including government agencies and local communities, involved in the project design and will they be involved in project implementation?
6. Cost-effectiveness: Is the proposed funding request commensurate and reasonable in view of the objectives and activities proposed? Is the proposed funding request acceptable within CEPF's overall budget allocation for the strategic direction?

7. Strategic alliances and partnerships: Does the project have the potential to establish and/or maintain long-term relationships for collaboration on biodiversity conservation with appropriate local, regional, or national organizations? Does it ensure coordination and build synergy with existing and future initiatives, especially with other projects funded by CEPF?
8. Leveraging resources: Does the project attract additional funding or an in-kind contribution that will directly increase CEPF's impact and contribute to project sustainability? Is the applicant already receiving funding for this project?

How to Apply

CEPF supports biodiversity conservation through two types of grants: **large grants of over US\$20,000 and small grants of US\$20,000 or less.**

All applicants must submit an LOI in English. The LOI template and application guidelines are available on both the [CEPF website](#) and [IUCN website](#). Before submitting formal LOIs, applicants are encouraged to discuss proposal ideas and eligibility with the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org.

The deadline for receipt of LOIs is midnight on Wednesday, 25 October 2017.

Process for applying for a small grant (US\$20,000 or less)

1. Read through all the sections of this Call for Proposals document carefully, and contact the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org to:
 - a. Confirm your eligibility to apply;
 - b. Ensure your proposal idea fits with CEPF's strategy for the East Melanesian Islands and with the specific priorities for this call for proposals;
 - c. Get further information or clarity on CEPF's policies and procedures or the application process.

IUCN, as the RIT, awards and manages CEPF small grants.

2. Download the CEPF East Melanesian Islands [small grant LOI form](#) in English. If you are having difficulties accessing the form, please contact the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org.

3. Once the LOI is completed, send an email to cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org with the LOI attached, on or before the deadline of **Wednesday, 25 October 2017**. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application. Please note that hardcopy LOIs are not acceptable.

4. A decision on the LOI will be made by the RIT with input from our independent Technical Advisory Group in each country as well as other external technical reviewers if needed. IUCN will aim to send a communication by no later than 15th December 2017 to let you know if your LOI has been successful.

5. If the LOI has been successful, you will be asked to complete a Financial Risk Assessment form and an Anti-Terrorist and World Bank Screening form before signing a contract with IUCN for a small grant.

Process for applying for a large grant (more than US\$20,000)

1. Read through all the sections of this Call for Proposals document carefully, and contact the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org to:
 - a. Confirm your eligibility to apply;
 - b. Ensure your proposal idea fits with CEPF's strategy for the East Melanesian Islands and with the specific priorities for this call for proposals;
 - c. Get further information or clarity on CEPF's policies and procedures or the application process.

The CEPF Secretariat awards and manages large grants with support from the RIT.

2. Applicants must submit a letter of inquiry through the ConservationGrants electronic portal. CEPF will not accept letters of inquiry via electronic mail or any other mechanism.

Applicants who do not have a ConservationGrants account will be required to [register a new account](#). Questions regarding account creation or the application process should be emailed to conservationgrants@conservation.org.

Application guidelines can also be [downloaded from the CEPF website](#).

3. Please complete the LOI in ConservationGrants no later than the deadline of midnight, Eastern Standard Time on **Wednesday, 25 October 2017**. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application. Please note that hardcopy LOIs are not acceptable.

4. A decision on the LOI is based on reviews by the CEPF Secretariat, the RIT, our independent Technical Advisory Group in each country and other external technical reviewers where necessary. The CEPF Secretariat will aim to send a communication by no later than 31 December 2017 to let you know the recommendations of the CEPF evaluation process regarding your proposal.

5. If your LOI has been successful, the CEPF Secretariat will invite you to prepare a full project proposal in the Conservation Grants electronic portal. The detailed guidelines for preparing a full project proposal and contracting timeline will be provided with the letter of invitation.

Full proposals that receive a positive review will lead to the award of a grant between Conservation International, as the host of the CEPF Secretariat, and the recipient (the “grantee”). Grants will be denominated in United States dollars and grant agreements will be in English.

Further Information and Support

For general questions about this call for proposals, please contact the CEPF regional implementation team at IUCN Oceania.

Based on experience from previous calls for proposals, discussing your proposal idea with us before submitting it will significantly increase the chances of success. **Please contact us before Wednesday 18 October to discuss your ideas.**

Email: cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org

Website: www.iucn.org/regions/oceania

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For specific questions related to this call, you may also contact:

Helen Pippard, regional implementation team project manager: helen.pippard@iucn.org

Fiona Rodie-Posala, country coordinator for Solomon Islands: fiona.rodie@ext.iucn.org

Zola Sangga, country coordinator for Papua New Guinea: zola.sangga@ext.iucn.org

Vatumaraga Molisa, country coordinator for Vanuatu: vatumaraga.molisa@iucn.org