



## Call for Proposals: Regional Implementation Team for the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot

**Opening date:** 1 March 2010

**Closing date and time:** 5 April 2010, 5:00 p.m. *Johannesburg time*

**Location:** CEPF, 2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 500, Crystal City VA 22202, USA

### 1. INVITATION

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International (CI), the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank designed to help safeguard the world's biodiversity hotspots. As one of the founding partners, CI administers the global program through a CEPF Secretariat.

Nongovernment organizations are invited to apply for a five-year grant to become the Regional Implementation Team that will lead implementation of a \$5.5 million CEPF investment strategy for the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Biodiversity Hotspot. The maximum funding available for this grant will be \$550,000.

The Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot spans an area of nearly 275,000 km<sup>2</sup> and includes portions of South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique. The hotspot is the second richest floristic region in southern Africa (after the Cape Floristic Region) and also the second richest floristic region in Africa for its size. The coastal waters of this hotspot are also significant at the global level for their diversity of marine species. The CEPF investment strategy will focus on the highest priorities for conservation in two priority corridors and 22 key biodiversity areas in the region.

A final draft of the full CEPF ecosystem profile can be found on the CEPF Web site at [www.cepf.net/Documents/DC\\_Finaldraft\\_MPAHprofile\\_Feb262010.pdf](http://www.cepf.net/Documents/DC_Finaldraft_MPAHprofile_Feb262010.pdf), including the five-year investment strategy and maps identifying priority sites for investment. This call for proposals is being issued simultaneously with submission of the draft profile to the CEPF Donor Council for review and approval.

Organizations or consortia of organizations wishing to apply to become the Regional Implementation Team **must first submit an e-mail to [cepfgiants@conservation.org](mailto:cepfgiants@conservation.org)** indicating interest in serving as the Regional Implementation Team in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot. Interested parties will then receive instructions for accessing the on-line portion of the application.

### 2. CONFERENCE AND CLARIFICATIONS

CEPF will hold a conference for interested parties via telephone conference call at 15:00 on 15 March 2010 (*Johannesburg time*). To gain access to this call, interested parties should dial ++ 1-219-509-8111.

The participant code for the conference is 670212. CEPF representatives will briefly describe the expectations for the Regional Implementation Team and take questions at that time. The conference call will be conducted in English. We encourage submission of questions in advance via e-mail to [cepfgrants@conservation.org](mailto:cepfgrants@conservation.org). We will release a transcript of the conference on [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net).

Apart from questions asked at the conference, interested parties may also submit questions by e-mail for clarification to [cepfgrants@conservation.org](mailto:cepfgrants@conservation.org) by 17 March 2010. Again, CEPF will post all questions received and responses for public viewing on [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net) by 22 March 2010.

We may also use [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net) to release other explanatory documents that may assist applicants in completing their proposals.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

The Ecosystem Profile for the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot was developed through a process of stakeholder consultation and expert research studies coordinated by Conservation International's Southern Africa Hotspots Program and the South African National Biodiversity Institute. More than 150 stakeholders from civil society, government and donor institutions were consulted during the preparation.

The ecosystem profile presents an overview of the hotspot in terms of its biological importance, climate change impacts, major threats to and root causes of biodiversity loss, socioeconomic context, and current conservation investments. It provides a suite of measurable conservation outcomes, identifies funding gaps, and opportunities for investment, and thus identifies the niche where CEPF investment can provide the greatest incremental value. It also contains a five-year investment strategy for CEPF in the region. This investment strategy comprises a series of strategic funding opportunities, termed strategic directions, broken down into a number of investment priorities outlining the types of activities that will be eligible for CEPF funding. The ecosystem profile does not include specific project concepts, as civil society groups will develop these as part of their applications for CEPF grant funding.

CEPF's niche in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot will be to support civil society in applying innovative approaches to conservation in under-capacitated protected areas, key biodiversity areas and priority corridors, thereby enabling changes in policy and building resilience in the region's ecosystems and economy to sustain biodiversity in the long term. CEPF support will lead to broad participation of civil society in strengthening protection and management of the highest priority areas for conservation and will stimulate sustainability of its interventions by catalyzing and creating an enabling environment. Acknowledging key capacity constraints in Mozambique and Swaziland, CEPF will make specific contributions to enable longer-term conservation efforts in these countries. CEPF will secure and expand societal investment in maintaining healthy ecosystems by influencing policies and practices, and will ensure that ecosystem resilience is maintained and restored.

The Ecosystem Profile identifies five strategic directions for expenditure of \$5.5 million:

1. Strengthen protection and management in under-capacitated and emerging protected areas in three priority key biodiversity areas.
2. Expand conservation areas and improve land use in 19 key biodiversity areas through innovative approaches.
3. Maintain and restore ecosystem function and integrity in the Highland Grasslands and Pondoland Corridors.
4. Create an enabling environment to improve conservation and management of Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany priority sites.
5. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a regional implementation team.

Each of these strategic directions has related indicators for measuring performance of the overall portfolio. Together, these combine toward overall targets of:

- At least 40 civil society actors actively participate in conservation programs guided by the ecosystem profile.
- 1,400,000 hectares of key biodiversity areas (5 percent of the hotspot) with strengthened protection and management, including at least 300,000 hectares of new protected areas.
- 1,465,000 hectares in production landscapes managed for biodiversity conservation or sustainable use.

The Regional Implementation Team is responsible for Strategic Direction 5, but implicitly becomes a critical partner of the CEPF Secretariat based at Conservation International headquarters as well as to the other CEPF donors.

**The purpose of this Call for Proposals is for interested organizations to demonstrate their approach to Strategic Direction 5 within the context of the challenges presented in the Ecosystem Profile and the other four strategic directions.**

The Terms of Reference for the Regional Implementation Team are located in section 9.

#### **4. ELIGIBILITY AND EXCLUSIONS**

Nongovernmental organizations and other civil society applicants with substantial experience in biodiversity conservation may apply for funding. Government-owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can establish that the enterprise or institution (i) has a legal personality independent of any government agency or actor; (ii) has the authority to apply for and receive private funds; and (iii) may not assert a claim of sovereign immunity.

Provided an organization meets the above description, groups that participated in the ecosystem profiling process, as a stakeholder, participant, author, or consultant are **not precluded** from applying. Any potential advantage gained as a result of involvement in creating the CEPF ecosystem profile for the region will not be considered during selection of the winning bid.

The Regional Implementation Team can consist of a single entity or a consortium of eligible entities. If a consortium is submitting a proposal, then one organization must be clearly identified as the lead. The lead organization will have final responsibility for submitting the consolidated proposal, and if successful, will be responsible for leading implementation, reporting to CEPF, receiving and disbursing funds, and coordinating the other members of the consortium.

Organizations that are members of the selected Regional Implementation Team will **not** be eligible to apply for other CEPF grants within the same hotspot. Applications from formal affiliates of those organizations that have an independent operating board of directors will be accepted and subject to additional external review.

#### **5. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

The period of performance is five years from the date of award.

#### **6. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE**

The place of performance is within the hotspot countries of Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland.

## **7. SEPARATE AWARD OF REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM GRANT AND SMALL GRANTS FUND**

This call for proposals will result in two separate contractual agreements for the winning organization or consortium. The first will be a grant to serve as the Regional Implementation Team with the terms of reference provided below. The maximum value of this award will be \$550,000.

The winning applicant will also receive a separate grant strictly for the award of grants of \$20,000 and less. The total amount to be awarded as these small grants will be determined as part of strategy implementation, but could be in the range of \$500,000.

## **8. SOLICITATION, REVIEW AND AWARD**

This call for proposals is being distributed widely by the CEPF Secretariat, including direct distribution to all stakeholders who participated in the ecosystem profiling process for the region, release via the CEPF global Web site and the CEPF e-newsletter, and via CEPF donor partners and well-known organizations both internationally and within the region.

The CEPF Secretariat is responsible for the analysis and ranking of applications. The Secretariat will present this analysis and all responsive applications to the CEPF Working Group, which consists of representatives from each donor. The Working Group will make the final recommendation to the program's Donor Council, which will formally approve the selection of the Regional Implementation Team.

The review and selection process for the Regional Implementation Team is expected to be completed within 3-4 months from the application period close date.

## **9. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **Regional Implementation Team Terms of Reference and Selection Process**

Nongovernmental organizations selected to function as Regional Implementation Teams for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) beginning in 2007 will provide strategic leadership for the program in each of the biodiversity hotspots approved for investment.

Each Regional Implementation Team (RIT) will consist of one or more civil society organizations active in conservation in the region. For example, a team could be a partnership of civil society groups or could be a lead organization with a formal plan to engage others in overseeing implementation, such as through an inclusive advisory committee.

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The objective of the Regional Implementation Teams will be to convert the plans in the ecosystem profile into cohesive portfolios of grants that exceed in impact the sum of their parts.

The teams will provide local knowledge and insights and will represent CEPF in each hotspot region. They will have primary responsibility for building a broad constituency of civil society groups working

across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profiles.

The teams will operate in a transparent and open manner, consistent with the CEPF mission and all provisions of the CEPF Operational Manual.

Organizations that are members of the Regional Implementation Team will not be eligible to apply for other CEPF grants within the same hotspot. Applications from formal affiliates of those organizations that have an independent operating board of directors will be accepted, and subject to additional external review.

#### **Major Functions:**

- Act as an extension service to assist civil society groups in designing, implementing, and replicating successful conservation activities.
- Review all grant applications and manage external reviews with technical experts and advisory committees.
- Award grants up to \$20,000 and decide jointly with the CEPF Secretariat on all other applications.
- Lead the monitoring and evaluation of individual projects using standard tools, site visits, and meetings with grantees, and assist the CEPF Secretariat in portfolio-level monitoring and evaluation.
- Widely communicate CEPF objectives, opportunities to apply for grants, lessons learned, and results.
- Involve the existing regional program of the RIT, CEPF donor and implementing agency representatives, government officials, and other sectors within the hotspot in implementation.
- Ensure effective coordination with the CEPF Secretariat on all aspects of implementation.

#### **Specific Activities:**

- Announce the availability of CEPF grants; publicize the contents of the ecosystem profile and information about the application process; and with the CEPF Secretariat establish schedules for the consideration of proposals at pre-determined intervals, including decision dates.
- Assist civil society groups in designing proposals that contribute to the achievement of objectives specified in the ecosystem profile and a coherent portfolio of mutually supportive grants.
- Assist grantees as needed to build their institutional capacity in critical aspects of conservation action, with a focus on project design and management, monitoring, and financial management.
- Evaluate letters of inquiry for all sizes of grants using standard tools provided by CEPF.
- Award grants of up to \$20,000 that advance the objectives of the ecosystem profile and reinforce larger grant actions; handle contracting of these awards with grantees; provide documentation of these grants to the CEPF Secretariat; and monitor and document grantees' performance.
- Prepare project documentation for external review for grants of more than \$250,000.
- Collaborate with the CEPF Secretariat in maintaining accuracy of the CEPF grants management database; collect and report on data for portfolio and global indicators.
- Facilitate information exchange, establishment and/or strengthening of partnerships between CEPF grantees and key stakeholder groups, and replication of successful projects.
- Monitor the performance of grant recipients, including compliance with grant contracts and required reporting, using standard templates and other tools provided by CEPF.
- Conduct project site visits on a regular schedule as agreed with the CEPF Grant Director and prepare standard trip reports.
- Submit an annual report on the performance of the Regional Implemental Team against the objectives in the ecosystem profile and logical framework. Support the CEPF Secretariat in preparing annual portfolio-level performance evaluation reports.

- Support a mid-term and a final assessment of the portfolio and global program. Advise the CEPF Secretariat regarding adjustments to the ecosystem profile at the mid-point if necessary to respond to major changes in regional context.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

The teams will be chosen on a transparent and competitive basis.

A request for proposals will be distributed widely by the CEPF Secretariat. This will include direct distribution to all stakeholders who participated in the ecosystem profiling process for the region, publicizing the request for proposals on the CEPF global Web site and in the CEPF e-newsletter, and encouraging CEPF donor partners and well-known organizations both internationally and within the region to distribute the announcement through their regional networks.

The call for proposals will detail the opportunity presented to lead implementation in the relevant hotspot, and will include the Terms of Reference, criteria for evaluation, and a closing date for the receipt of proposals by the CEPF Secretariat. It will also include the maximum budget amount allocated for the Regional Implementation Team in the region and a link to the approved ecosystem profile on the CEPF Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net).

Applicants will be required to submit a proposal in the approved CEPF application template, including detailed project objectives (goal, purpose, outputs), the organization's comparative advantage in carrying out the role as a Regional Implementation Team, and clear performance indicators. In addition, the proposal must include a detailed budget, logical framework and five-year work plan and identify a single regional coordinator who will be principally responsible for carrying out these plans.

The Secretariat will analyze and rank the applications using the criteria described below. To maintain an open and objective selection process, any potential advantage gained as a result of involvement in creating the CEPF ecosystem profile for the region will not be considered as part of the assessment.

The Secretariat will present the applications and its analysis to the CEPF Working Group, which will develop a recommendation for the CEPF Donor Council. The final selection will be approved by the Donor Council.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Applications**

In assessing applications, the following capabilities will be considered:

**1. Programmatic Capacity/Experience:** Successful applicants will be nongovernmental organizations presenting substantial experience in biodiversity conservation in the region. Applicants should present a clear and compelling justification for their application. This should include how their institutional strategy would be advanced by the organization's stewardship of the CEPF strategy and would help to ensure sustainability of results beyond the CEPF implementation period. Other important indicators will include:

- A mission statement that is congruent with the objectives and priorities identified for the region in the ecosystem profile.
- Proposed key personnel, including their qualifications and proposed roles.
- An acknowledged position of leadership within the region's civil society sector.
- Demonstrated experience in working with partners (such as NGOs, community organizations, and the private sector) to improve the effectiveness of conservation programs.

- Demonstrated commitment to strengthening other less developed civil society organizations.
- Well-established professional relationships with national and local government agencies and other sectors in the region.
- Ability to represent and widely communicate the CEPF mission, objectives, and opportunities, as well as experiences, lessons learned, and results.
- A strong commitment to monitoring and evaluation as indicated by functioning systems to monitor and evaluate the applicant's own programs.
- An existing sustainable conservation program in the region, demonstrated by its duration and record of support by other donors.

**2. Administrative Capacity/Experience:** A sound and tested financial and administrative system will be a key area for assessment in each application. Applicants should describe in detail their existing administrative and financial structures and how these structures would support effective and efficient implementation work. Among the financial and administrative factors for consideration are:

- Demonstrated ability to track, record, and account for funds received and disbursed.
- Segregation of duties. (For example, the person who makes the grant cannot be the same person who approves the payments or authorizes disbursement).
- Defined administrative/financial roles and a chart indicating the leadership and employee structure of the organization.
- Regular completion of reconciliations of money received and disbursed, in comparison with bank statements.
- Internal controls and objective criteria that guide the review of payment requests and other invoices.
- Systematic record keeping.
- Fraud and embezzlement safeguards.
- Ability to carry out the CEPF mission using locally appropriate languages in work with applicants and government officials, and to use English for all evaluations of proposals and reporting on grantee performance.
- Certified audits conducted on an annual basis with no material findings. Two most recent audits should be provided as part of the proposal.

Applicants should detail how they would adapt or expand their own administrative systems to enable effective award, management, and monitoring of individual grants of up to \$20,000.

## **10. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS**

The application process for the Regional Implementation Team involves completion of several separate elements, described below. Please consult the CEPF Operational Manual, as the Regional Implementation Team will be responsible for helping CEPF fulfill the policies and procedures contained therein. The CEPF Operational Manual is located on the CEPF Web site at <http://www.cepf.net/resources/publications/Pages/default.aspx>.

### **10.1. Grant Writer Proposal**

CEPF uses proprietary software called Grant Writer to manage grant applications and implementation. All organizations indicating an interest in applying to CEPF to become the Regional Implementation Team will receive detailed instructions on how to connect to this system.

The Grant Writer template is designed to ideally facilitate applications by organizations seeking to implement work that falls within Strategic Directions 1-4 of the Ecosystem Profile. For this reason,

certain fields within the template may not appear directly relevant to the tasks of the Regional Implementation Team. There may also be redundancy between certain fields in Grant Writer and the Microsoft Word/PDF files requested below.

The Grant Writer template allows grant applicants to develop their full proposal, project components, budget, logical framework and performance tracker for the period of the project. It also contains sections on organizational information and project information.

Applicants are expected to use the six components listed below as the major elements of their **logical framework**. Applicants will distinguish themselves with their specific approach to these major elements.

- Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany Hotspot.
- Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation, review and evaluation.
- Monitor and evaluate individual project grants and assist with monitoring overall portfolio performance.
- Manage a Small Grants Program for all grants for civil society up to \$20,000.
- Act as an extension service to assist civil society groups in designing, implementing and replicating successful conservation activities.

The **performance tracker** should correspond to the logical framework and be completed for five years.

The **budget worksheet** in Grant Writer should be fully complete. The “comments” field for each line item in the budget should show explicit calculation, breakdowns, and assumptions in all costs of more than \$250. If indirect costs are included in the budget, these must conform to the applicant’s organizational policy on indirect costs, and be fully auditable. Costs for the mid-term and final assessment workshop (see TOR) should be excluded from the budget as these will be covered separately.

The proposed budget should be only for the Regional Implementation Team award and not the separate Small Grants Fund. The Small Grants Fund will consist of **only** the money for the small grants themselves, and perhaps associated amounts related to bank fees or exchange costs. Otherwise, the Regional Implementation Team grant budget should incorporate all costs associated with implementing the terms of reference, including the labor associated with managing the Small Grants Fund.

Note that if a consortium of organizations is applying, only the Lead Grantee will submit a Grant Writer application.

## **10.2. Additional Attached Proposal Files in Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF**

Parallel to the Grant Writer proposal, applicants should provide separate file(s) demonstrating the following.

- **Institutional experience** related to the tasks described in the Terms of Reference and Ecosystem Profile, including demonstrated experience in the following areas:
  - i. playing a leadership role in biodiversity conservation in southern Africa;
  - ii. working with diverse civil society organizations, including providing technical assistance for project proposal development and implementation;

- iii. conducting performance, programmatic, and financial management monitoring;
  - iv. working with donors, governments, communities, the private sector, and other stakeholders on conservation and development issues, including building alliances and networks of stakeholder groups to achieve conservation goals; and
  - v. managing multi-faceted programs and grants of similar size, scope and complexity as the Regional Implementation Team and Small Grants Fund.
- **Project rationale and approach** demonstrating a clear understanding of the Ecosystem Profile, including the conservation issues in the Hotspot, the strategic directions and investment priorities, and overall mission and strategic approach CEPF; the role of civil society to achieve the investment strategy set out in the Profile; and the constraints and opportunities working in a diverse and broad political, socioeconomic, and geographic environment. Applicants should demonstrate a clear approach to working with civil society and an understanding of the different contexts/challenges facing civil society organizations in the hotspot.

Applicants should provide further explicit text on their approach to (i) working with grantees and other important stakeholder groups to build a grant portfolio that encourages collaboration and synergy to implement the CEPF investment strategy, and (ii) ensuring sustainability and replicability of their efforts.

- **Management systems and/or approach**, including the items described in the Terms of Reference for administrative capacity, systems for monitoring grants and for managing a small grants fund (including solicitation, award, monitoring and evaluation, and modification and/or resolution of non-performing grants). Furthermore, given the challenge of working in multiple countries and locales, applicants should be specific about their proposed placement of personnel; their ability to work in multiple languages (e.g. English and Portuguese); and their understanding of constraints for implementing the CEPF strategy and managing a small grants program in multiple countries. Applicants should further describe their plan for engaging personnel and mobilizing the program.

Applicants should provide an organizational chart describing the lines of authority between individuals or organizational relationships between consortium members to achieve desired results. This figure should show where individuals are placed (e.g., city) and relationships between the Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat and various other stakeholders.

This section should also provide, as appropriate, work flow diagrams (e.g., for soliciting and awarding grants), work plans (e.g., Gantt charts), or any other visual element better explaining *how* technical activities will take place.

If a consortium of organizations is applying, this section should explain the contractual arrangements that will be made between the lead applicant and subordinate partners.

- **Curricula vitae** of all principal technical personnel making up the regional implementation team should be provided.
- **Budget in Microsoft Excel.** Parallel to the Grant Writer budget worksheet, applicants should provide a budget in Excel. The worksheet should show the mathematical calculations for all cost elements.

- **A list of all documents submitted**, so that CEPF can be sure that all documents have been received. This list should be included in a cover note.

### **10.3. Financial Questionnaire**

All applicants, including members of a consortium, will need to complete a financial questionnaire as part of their full application. The questionnaire itself requests further documentation about your organization, including financial statements, auditor statements and registration/incorporation certification.

### **10.4. Anti Terrorism Screening**

The highest rated applicant will subsequently be required, per U.S. law, to complete forms demonstrating compliance with anti-terrorism statutes.

**END OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS**