



## Call for Letters of Inquiry nr 18

### Small Grants

#### Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

<b>Eligible Countries:</b>	Lebanon
<b>Opening Date:</b>	Friday 12 February 2021
<b>Closing Date:</b>	Friday 12 March 2021, 23.59 CET
<b>Project Budget:</b>	Between USD 5,000 and USD 20,000 per grant
<b>Project Timeframe:</b>	Projects can start from 1 May 2021 at the earliest, and must be completed by 30 April 2022

CEPF and BirdLife International, serving as [regional implementation team](#) (RIT) for the hotspot, are inviting proposals in the form of letters of inquiry (LOIs) for small grants from civil society organizations. Applicants are advised to read this call for proposals document in full and submit LOIs under the scope of this call.

#### BACKGROUND

The [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund \(CEPF\)](#) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

The Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot is the second largest hotspot in the world and the largest of the world's five Mediterranean-climate regions. CEPF's niche for investment in the Mediterranean was formulated through a participatory process that engaged civil society, donor and governmental stakeholders throughout the region. The resulting investment strategy (2017-2022) is documented within the ecosystem profile, available [here](#) (PDF – 31 MB). This investment strategy comprises of a series of strategic directions, broken down into investment priorities outlining the types of activities that will be eligible for CEPF funding.

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Non-governmental organizations, community groups, universities and private enterprises may apply for funding. Individuals must work with civil society organizations to develop applications rather than apply directly.

Organizations must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions.

Government-owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can demonstrate that the enterprise or institution has:

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

Grants cannot be used for:

- the purchase of land, involuntary resettlement of people, or activities that negatively affect physical cultural resources, including those important to local communities.
- activities adversely affecting Indigenous Peoples or where these communities have not provided their broad support to the project activities.
- removal or alteration of any physical cultural property (includes sites having archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious or unique natural values).

Proposed activities should observe all other relevant safeguard and social policies as set out on the [CEPF website](#).

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The scope of this call is limited to the types of activities and locations described below.

LOIs will only be accepted for the following Strategic Direction:

- **Strategic Direction 2:** “Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity”

**Eligible country:** Lebanon

Project proposals should be built on biodiversity conservation as a fundamental component, and should demonstrate positive impacts on the conservation status of biodiversity.

Where relevant, applicants are encouraged to submit LOIs which harmonize with existing national or regional initiatives. Synergies with other organizations are also eligible, with one lead organization submitting the application, and project partners with clear roles stated in the LOI.

**Table 1. Eligible Strategic Direction and Investment Priorities [please see Annex 1 for further guidance and inspiration]**

Strategic direction	Investment priority / focal areas
Strategic Direction 2: Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity.	Investment Priority 2.1: Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services.  <i>please see Annex 1 for further guidance and inspiration</i>
	Investment Priority 2.3 Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority catchment management zones.  <i>please see Annex 1 for further guidance and inspiration</i>

## ELIGIBLE SITES

All sites (Freshwater Ecosystems) in Lebanon with high biodiversity value and where potential development planning might take place, are eligible under this call for proposals.

## COVID-19

COVID-19 is having a serious impact on rural communities and the need to revitalize and support them at this time is even greater. CEPF welcomes project interventions to tackle these issues as long as they remain in line with the criteria outlined in this document.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications (LOIs) must be written in **English** or **French**. Please **download the LOI form** in [English](#) or [French](#).

Applicants must submit their letter of inquiry by the deadline to [CEPF-MED-RIT@birdlife.org](mailto:CEPF-MED-RIT@birdlife.org). You will receive an acknowledgement from the RIT confirming your submission.

The LOI review and contracting process will take approximately eight weeks from the deadline date. The review committee will select the strongest LOIs which meet the eligibility criteria in the sections above. All applicants will receive a response from the RIT following the review of their project.

Applications that have been accepted will be moved to the second stage and asked to elaborate their LOI with a more detailed budget and logframe. Final approved LOIs will be awarded a small grant, with an agreement made between BirdLife International, as the RIT for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, and the applicant's institution (the "grantee"). Grants will be denominated in United States dollars and grant agreements will be in English.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

All applicants are advised to review the CEPF Investment Strategy for the Mediterranean Basin within the ecosystem profile. This provides more detail on the types of activities CEPF will fund under each investment priority:

- Ecosystem Profile: [English](#) (PDF – 16 MB)
- Ecosystem Profile Technical Summary: [English](#) (PDF – 2.2 MB), [French](#) (PDF – 5 MB)

An interactive map of the Mediterranean Hotspot can be accessed [here](#); use the top right-hand "layer list" icon to select the layer you would like to view.

CEPF is committed to integrating gender into its portfolio. Applicants should design projects and write proposals that consider gender issues in the achievement of their conservation impacts. CEPF has developed several resources that can help applicants to design, implement and evaluate gender-aware projects ([CEPF Gender Toolkit](#), PDF – 359 KB) and understand what CEPF seeks in a proposal ([CEPF Gender Fact Sheet](#), PDF – 352 KB). Visit the [CEPF and Gender webpage](#) to learn more about how CEPF addresses gender in the projects it supports. The integration of gender in your project will be a factor in evaluation.

*Helpful resources:*

- [Eligibility and How to Apply](#)
- [Safeguard Policies](#)
- [12 Tips for Getting Your Grant Idea Funded](#)
- [CEPF Project Database](#)

## CONTACT

Before applying, applicants are encouraged to discuss project ideas and eligibility with the Program Officer for the Middle East, Sharif Jbour at [sharif.jbour@birdlife.org](mailto:sharif.jbour@birdlife.org)

For general queries about the CEPF Mediterranean Basin Hotspot Programme, please contact Small Grant Manager Salwa Elhalwani at [salwa.elhalwani@birdlife.org](mailto:salwa.elhalwani@birdlife.org), or visit [www.birdlife.org/cepf-med](http://www.birdlife.org/cepf-med).

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## ANNEX 1 - Guidance for Letters of Inquiry (LoIs) under Strategic Direction 2

Nearly one-third of the Critically Endangered species found in the Mediterranean basin hotspot are freshwater animals and plants. The need for fresh water for agriculture and human consumption is one of the most persuasive reasons for the sustainable management of natural resources. Nevertheless, the hotspot's freshwater ecosystems are poorly represented in national protected areas networks, they are under pressure from over-use and pollution, and the species that live in them suffer from over-exploitation and disturbance. Climate change is likely to make these problems worse.

Lebanon is endowed with substantial richness in freshwater resources; this is a direct consequence of its unique topographic and geological features. Several rivers traverse the slopes of its mountain ranges and high plains. In spite of their paramount significance, freshwater ecosystems do not receive the attention they deserve; they are least valued and never treated holistically, they are also poorly studied.

These ecosystems are subject to intense pressures, including logging on valley slopes, disfiguring by sand and rock quarries, development, urban planning, road cutting, invasive species and pollution. Dams constitute a more recent but severe threat that emerged in the last few years after a national plan to store surface water in Lebanon.

CEPF funding will address the need to improve knowledge on important sites for freshwater biodiversity, using this as an opportunity to build capacity for research and conservation action on freshwater organisms.

The main objective of this call is to improve and fill gaps in knowledge of biodiversity of freshwater ecosystems and their values in Lebanon, and enhance alignment between the needs of biodiversity and development in such areas.

This will significantly contribute to improving the management of freshwater ecosystems, identifying species conservation priorities and will provide resources that are essential for guiding decisions on the conservation and sustainable management of freshwater biodiversity.

### **CEPF expects project proposals that integrate assessments on the following components:**

- Fill knowledge gaps on the distribution, population and threat status of biodiversity within priority freshwater ecosystems to identify sites of conservation priority;
- Rapid assessment on the social and economic values of freshwater ecosystem services;
- Collating data on utilisation by humans, for several groups of species that are reliable indicators of the biological functioning of freshwater ecosystems;
- Provide recommendations for conservation and management of critical freshwater ecosystems; and to act as a guidance for conservation investment and sustainable development;
- Provide considerations on the impact of water resources development within freshwater ecosystems on biodiversity to balance the use of freshwater for consumption and healthy ecosystems;
- Engaging with decision-makers in river basin management policy and planning processes to encourage alignment of conservation with land-use, economic development and sustainable water management priorities;
- Communicating research findings to decision-makers and the local public (especially water users, for example), forming the basis for a call for action on threats to water quality and freshwater biodiversity.