

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council  
Virtual Meeting  
Wednesday 9 October 2024  
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)  
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Brussels and Paris Time  
9:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. (+1 day) Tokyo Time**

**Donor Council 43 Minutes**

**1. Welcome by the Chair and Introduction of Participants ([CEPF/DC43/1](#))**

The Chairperson welcomed new representatives, Matthieu Le Grix from the Agence Française de Développement and Thierry Renaud from the Fondation Hans Wilsdorf.

**2. Adoption of Agenda ([CEPF/DC43/2](#))**

The minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Donor Council meeting were approved with no comments.

**3. Presentation and Discussion of the Executive Director's Report  
([CEPF/DC43/3](#))**

a) Action Points Review ([CEPF/DC43/3/a](#))

FY23: Q4 and FY24: Q1 & Q2 Approved Grants.

*Action Item: The CEPF Secretariat will update the list of approved grants so it has more color and better presentation.*

The Secretariat noted that the list of Approved Grants had been updated with a new look.

Review of Staffing

*Action Item: The CEPF Secretariat will do an analysis of its operation to ensure that CEPF is adequately staffed for its current program.*

The analysis of the CEPF Secretariat was done for the renewal of Conservation International (CI) commitment in 2026. It has been presented to CI. The report will be presented at the next Donor Council meeting.

Strategic Use of the \$15.1 Million Catalyzed from the Fondation Hans Wilsdorf and Possible Role of the Foundation in the Governance of CEPF

*Action Item: The CEPF Secretariat will provide suggestions for revision for the Operational Manual section OM5.4 to define the role of a guest on the Donor Council more clearly.*

The update of section OM5.4 has not yet been completed but the Secretariat plans to address the issue in the coming months.

***Action Item: The full report of the CEPF Secretariat staffing analysis will be presented at the next Donor Council Meeting 44<sup>th</sup>.***

b) Partnership Highlights ([CEPF/DC43/3/b](#))

The Agence française de développement confirmed that a matching contribution of €5 Million was approved for commitment and that it is committed for their 2024 budget. For 2025, there is a prospect of securing a contribution of up to €10 Million for the Guinean Forest of West Africa and the Mediterranean Basin biodiversity hotspots.

The Government of Japan renewed its commitment to CEPF as it wants to look for future partnership. It also requested further explanation on R2C2, specifically about what criteria would trigger disbursement of funds, and about governance arrangements. The Secretariat explained that R2C2 funds would be awarded rapidly in response to natural or man-made crises. In the first year, the focus would be on biodiversity hotspots as CEPF has existing networks of grantees that can deliver responses. In the second year and onwards, funds would be available to all developing countries. There are broad criteria on the type of disaster that can be responded to, but there are no strict thresholds. There will be a committee, the "Rapid Response Committee", on which will seat a representative of each of the funding partners. Proposals will come to that committee and the committee will make a decision on which crisis to respond to against those criteria.

Regarding the Government of Canada funding, CEPF is hopeful, even though it is taking longer than expected. The funds were committed during COP 15, and the Secretariat hopes that an announcement will be made during COP 16. With a \$15 Million commitment, the GAC will be invited to join the CEPF Donor Council which they may accept or decline.

The GEF mentioned that they were excited to have CEPF part of the GEF Small Grants Programme as an implementing agency; with the project being on a good track to be included in the December work program.

The EU thanked CEPF Executive Director and Managing Director for their efforts to get R2C2 up and running.

c) FY24: Q3 & Q4 Approved Grants ([CEPF/DC43/3/c](#))

d) Financial Narrative ([CEPF/DC42/3/d](#))

e) Financial Report ([CEPF/DC42/3/e](#))

The Donor Council inquired whether the commitment from the Government of Canada was going to have any impact on the CEPF Secretariat's costs. The Secretariat responded that these funds would positively affect costs, as CEPF would remain attractive to donors as significant amount of projects would be awarded out. This increase in grant funding would help balance operational costs and grant costs. Additionally, absorbing more grant making would not increase operational cost ratio the same way. The Government of Canada funding will not require CEPF to open any new hotspots and the additional grant making would only increase slightly the cost of the Secretariat.

#### **4. Results of the 2023 CEPF Impact Report ([CEPF/DC43/4](#))**

The Donor Council appreciated the results of the Impact Report and questioned whether data on potential negative impact and social impact could also be captured because it would be important for CEPF to explain how it could address such issues. CEPF mentioned that it would be working, in the next few months and through a consultancy funded by AFD, on developing a policy on Equality and Inclusion that would focus on social impact, and more specifically on vulnerable people. It would include developing a policy and a monitoring tool, and indicators to measure such impact. The Secretariat agrees that it would be great to quantify the work that has been done to potentially stop negative impacts. Indeed, tracking negative impact is something that CEPF is trying to do in the grants it is awarding but without a precise tool to do so. That is something that CEPF will look into in the future.

The Donor Council inquired whether CEPF has initiatives to support indigenous groups. CEPF mentioned that it supports several initiatives and tracks which Indigenous organizations are granted to as well as where those projects take place. This is done through safeguards. It was noted that Indigenous People's organizations have been the recipients of 12% of CEPF grants.

#### **5. Partnership with Watch and Jewellery Initiative ([CEPF/DC43/5](#))**

The Secretariat provided an introduction of the Watch and Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030) which wishes to launch a Fund for Nature Restoration.

The Donor Council made clear that a potential partnership between CEPF and WJI 2030 might be concerning:

- There might be a risk to be associated with the companies in the value chain, with possible worries around independence and greenwashing.
- How would CEPF be able to respond and or make changes because of bad practices?
- Such partnership could set CEPF as a service provider for companies or the private sector that want to "green" themselves.
- There could be important reputational risks if there is no transparency or improvement of the supply chain; therefore, activities would have to be monitored carefully.
- Such partnership would allow those companies to clean up their supply chain (a supply that is driving the loss of the biodiversity), but it would not be about building or strengthening CSOs capacity.
- Due diligence would have to be performed to ensure that the initiative is concretely committed to reduce the impact of their value chains, and that it is not just an intention to do so.
- There could be a risk for CEPF to become an advisor for a private investment facility, because then CEPF would be part of investment decisions and would be partly responsible for potential negative impacts of these investments.

***Action Item: Any agreement with the Watch and Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030) will be presented to CEPF Donor Council for approval.***

***Action Item: The Donor Council recommended that it might be useful for CEPF to develop guidelines to determine which kind of companies CEPF should engage with.***

***Action Item: The Donor Council agreed for the Secretariat to proceed with caution, and to negotiate a partnership with the Watch and Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030) to design, launch and implement a Fund for Nature Restoration.***

## **6. Impacts of CEPF Investment on Globally Threatened Species** ([CEPF/DC42/6](#))

The Donor Council was impressed with the overview and conservation achievements in the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot that were presented.

## **7. Grantee Perception Survey** ([CEPF/DC43/7](#))

The Donor Council appreciated the Grantee Perception Survey report and the honest results that were presented. The positive comments and higher evaluation were recognized as a demonstration that CEPF and grantees are close partners. It was suggested that the Secretariat could look at CEP (Center for Effective Philanthropy) which works with foundations and does a grantee perception survey. It could be interesting to compare their results with CEPF's results.

## **8. Any Other Business and Conclusion** (CEPF/DC43/8)

The next Donor Council meeting will take place the week of February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in the Dominican Republic. It will be a Donor Council meeting followed by a 2-3 day fieldtrip.