

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
44th Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council
In-Person, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and Virtual Meeting
Tuesday 11 February 2025
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Santo Domingo Local Time
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Brussels and Paris Time
9:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. (+1 day) Tokyo Time**

Minutes

1. Welcome by the Chair and Introduction of Participants ([CEPF/DC44/1](#))

The Chairperson welcomed all participants and acknowledged the full room in Santo Domingo as well as the attendees online.

2. Adoption of Agenda ([CEPF/DC44/2](#))

The agenda was adopted as presented.

**3. Presentation and Discussion of the Executive Director's Report
(CEPF/DC44/3)**

a. Action Points Review ([CEPF/DC44/3/a](#))

Partnership with Watch and Jewellery Initiative

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

CEPF Executive Director explained that negotiations with WJI 2030 are currently on hold due to a lack of their availability at the present time. Negotiations should resume as soon as a new meeting date is provided.

Action Item: The Secretariat will develop guidelines for private sector engagement. The TOR for these guidelines will be put on the agenda of the next DC meeting.

a) Partnership Highlights ([CEPF/DC44/3/b](#))

CEPF Executive Director discussed the partnership with the Government of Canada: 50 grants were signed in the past month, totaling US\$12 million, so all funds have been allocated. As the Government of Canada has made a Qualifying Contribution to CEPF, an email invitation to be a member of CEPF Donor Council was sent to them. Their response will be shared with the Donor Council as soon as it is received.

The Donor Council expressed interest in lessons learned from the rapid response process of the R2C2 initiative. The Secretariat will share the Concept Note of the R2C2 that explains how it works.

Action Item: The Secretariat will share the Concept Note of the R2C2 with the Donor Council.

Action Item: The Secretariat will provide a report at the next Donor Council on progress so far with the R2C2 initiative.

Action Item: The Secretariat will report to the Donor Council, at its next meeting, on the findings of the stakeholder consultations for the GEF Small Grants Program.

b) FY25: Q1 and Q2 Approved Grants ([CEPF/DC44/3/c](#))

The Donor Council expressed positive comments about the diversity and relevance of the newly approved grants.

Action Item: The Secretariat will update the Donor Council at its next meeting on what CEPF is doing to promote NBSAPs.

c) Financial Narrative ([CEPF/DC44/3/d](#))

CEPF's Executive Director explained the importance of Conservation International's unrestricted funding. The current commitment is coming to an end in June 2025 after 7 years. Such funding permitted covering costs that were not covered by restricted funding. Conservation International is working on identifying ways to continue its support when budgeting for the new fiscal year.

The Donor Council raised questions about currency risks and the ratio of grant hours. The Secretariat addressed these concerns by explaining the impact of exchange rates and the nature of operational costs.

d) Financial Report ([CEPF/DC44/3/e](#))

4. CEPF Secretariat Staffing Analysis ([CEPF/DC44/4](#))

The Secretariat presented a staffing analysis of the CEPF Secretariat, noting the need to double the current number of Grant Directors and Grants Managers to handle the increased workload; and outlining the anticipated grant-making and staffing needs for the coming years. When asked about the recruitment strategy, it was explained that starting recruitment processes is contingent on securing funds. The Donor Council also emphasized the importance of a human resources needs assessment and understanding of CEPF's comparative and competitive advantages. The Donor Council stressed the

importance of improving work efficiency and the work environment for staff retention; but also recommended for the Secretariat to find donors that fund core support on top of granting. Finally, the GEF mentioned its directive to work more closely with the climate funds, and suggested that conversations between GEF, GCF and CEPF could be fruitful.

Action Item: The Secretariat will assess its current and future human resources needs and will report at the next Donor Council.

Action Item: The Secretariat will develop a financial outlook for CEPF and present it at a future Donor Council meeting.

5. Introduction to Organizational Development Initiative ([CEPF/DC44/5](#))

Consultants, Jany Barrault and Pierre Volant, from Gen-H and ikivox respectively, presented the preliminary elements of the CEPF organizational development strategy. They emphasized creating sustainable impact through capacity building. The team presented strategic components pertaining to eligibility criteria, organizational needs assessments, financial sustainability and impact assessment, as well as delivery mechanisms, and roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat, regional implementation teams and third-party providers.

The Donor Council noted the importance of organizational development for achieving biodiversity conservation goals, while stressing the need for integrating organizational development into CEPF's core strategy and ensuring it does not overwhelm resources for biodiversity conservation. The Donor Council also mentioned the importance of identifying CEPF's comparative advantages and leveraging and learning from other existing initiatives.

6. Caribbean Islands Investment Overview ([CEPF/DC44/6](#))

The Donor Council appreciated the significant contribution to biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot while improving the management of Key Biodiversity Areas and building the capacity of local CSOs. The Donor Council also stressed the importance of regular monitoring and emphasized the need for a strong communication and visibility policy to raise CEPF's profile.

Action Item: The Secretariat will include a discussion on strategic communication on the agenda of the next Donor Council meeting.

7. Any Other Business and Conclusion

It was mentioned that the next Donor Council meeting will be held in six months' time, either in the USA or Europe.