

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

No-Objection Recommendation Pursuant to Section 3.01 of the Operational Manual
19 October 2011

Selection of the Regional Implementation Team for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Recommended Action Items

Pursuant to the Working Group meeting of 27 July 2011, the Working Group is asked to review the revised proposals from Doğa Derneği to perform the administrative and programmatic functions of the Regional Implementation Team for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot and the Secretariat's analysis of these proposals, and to recommend the proposals on a no-objection basis to the Donor Council. The final selection will be approved by the Donor Council.

Overview

During the 29th meeting of the CEPF Working Group on 27 July 2011, the Working Group reviewed documentation pertaining to selection of the regional implementation team (RIT) for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. A single application was submitted, by Doğa Derneği, to fulfill the role of the RIT. The application comprised two separate proposals: one for the administrative functions of the RIT (*Mediterranean Regional Implementation Team: Administrative Functions*), and the other for the programmatic functions of the RIT (*Nature Alliance for the Mediterranean Basin*). The Working Group expressed overall positive support for the Doğa Derneği application and recommended that the Secretariat work with the applicant to refine the proposals and address their concerns. The specific concerns raised by the Working Group are listed below, followed by a brief summary of actions taken by the applicant to address them.

Content: The Working Group recommended several changes to the two proposals:

- there be a more clear division between the administrative and programmatic activities in the two proposals;
- the programmatic proposal be revised to be more attractive to donors;
- the small grants mechanism be consolidated into a single component of the administrative proposal;
- the RIT proposals also include provisions as to how the team could assist nascent civil society in the North African countries as they emerge from a period of civil upheaval; and
- the RIT's duties include a specific role to convene other donors and pursue fundraising opportunities.

➤ ***In response:*** All of the suggestions of the Working Group have been incorporated into the proposals in the appropriate sections. The administrative and programmatic tasks have been separated into different proposals. The small grants mechanism has been placed as a single component in the administrative proposal. The programmatic proposal articulates the programmatic role in a more appealing manner, and also includes a donor roundtable. Both proposals mention current political realities in the section on Social Context.

RIT structure: The Working Group requested clarity on the overall structure of the RIT, and specifically asked to see a chart that includes the lines of oversight within the RIT, and in turn the contractual

relationship and lines of authority for the sub-grants with BirdLife Secretariat, BirdLife-Middle East and LPO.

- ***In response:*** Doğa Derneği has clarified the lines of reporting and the contractual relationships in sections of the proposals and through numerous discussions with the Secretariat.

Grant Term: The Working Group was concerned about the four year timeframe of the application, and felt that this was not acceptable. As a solution, the Working Group recommended that the administrative proposal be extended to the full five years, and that the programmatic proposal be limited to four years.

- ***In response:*** The programmatic proposal spans the full four years. The administrative proposal spans four years and four months, falling short of the request that it extend for a full five years.

Budget: The Working Group deliberated about the cost of the RIT proposals and agreed to allow the increase of the budget of the administrative proposal to come in just under the \$1 million threshold.

- ***In response:*** The administrative budget has been increased to \$998,880.

Based upon the discussion and recommendations of the 27 July meeting, the CEPF Secretariat worked closely with Doğa Derneği over the last few months to restructure the proposals and associated budgets between the four organizations comprising the RIT.

This memo builds upon the previous analysis of the original RIT proposals submitted to the Working Group and discussed on 27 July 2011, and summarizes the Secretariat’s review of the revised proposals submitted by Doğa Derneği.

Analysis of Revised Proposals

Within both the administrative and programmatic proposals, individual components have been developed to address the roles and responsibilities of the RIT as comprehensively as possible without duplicating effort. The RIT will be lead by Doğa Derneği (DD), and will be supported by the BirdLife International Global Secretariat (BLGS), the BirdLife International Middle East (BLME) Division Program, and La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO).

Proposal components, and the organization leading their implementation, are as follows:

Table 1.

Administrative Components	Programmatic Components
1. Operationalize the Regional Implementation Team (RIT): Doğa Derneği.	1. Communicate the CEPF investment in the hotspot: Doğa Derneği.
2. Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review: Doğa Derneği.	2. Promote information exchange and facilitate development of partnerships across the hotspot, throughout different sectors and at local, national and international levels: Doğa Derneği.
3. Manage a program of small grants; that is, grants of less than \$20,000: Doğa Derneği.	3. Results and lessons learned documented and disseminated through a replication strategy: Doğa Derneği.
4. Monitor and evaluate CEPF investments at project and portfolio levels: Doğa Derneği.	4. Develop the capacity of grantees: Doğa Derneği.

5. Implementation of CEPF program in the Middle East: sub-grant to BirdLife International.	5. DD and BirdLife Secretariat work closely with CEPF Secretariat to leverage the investment for conservation outcomes in the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot through partnerships at project and portfolio levels: sub-grant to BirdLife International.
6. Implementation of the CEPF program in North Africa: sub-grant to LPO.	6. Coordinate and communicate the CEPF investment in the Middle East: sub-grant to BirdLife International for work to be undertaken by BirdLife International Middle East Division Program.
	7. Coordinate and communicate the CEPF investment in North Africa: sub-grant to LPO.

These form a cohesive set of components with associated activities that fully address the roles and responsibilities described in the terms of reference, and cover all 15 countries within the Mediterranean Basin that are eligible to receive CEPF funds.

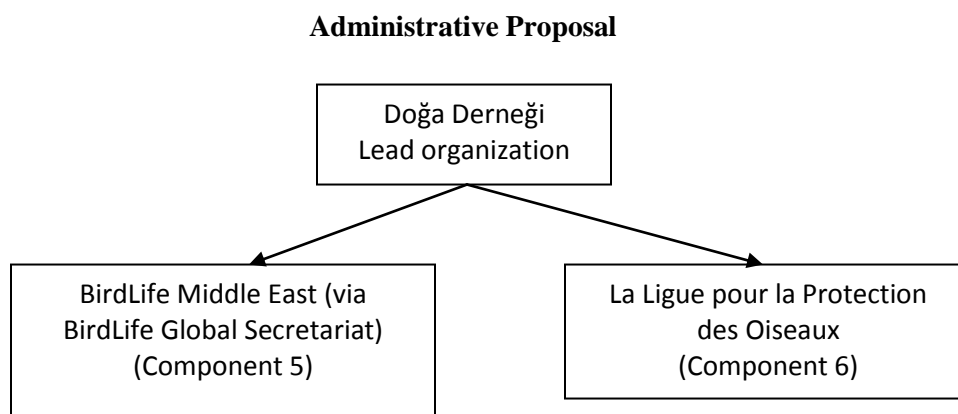
This structure closely follows the division of the RIT functions between the two roles. The proposal details how these will be undertaken by the four organizations in the partnership in the respective geographic regions.

With respect to the project officer based in LPO who will provide support to civil society organizations in North Africa, it is envisaged that this individual will be based in France initially, and after 12 to 18 months would be seconded to a local organization in one of the countries in the region.

As there is no absolute segregation of responsibilities between administrative and programmatic functions, each organization has some activities under both roles, but every attempt has been made to ensure that these activities are complimentary and not duplicative.

As mentioned above, Doğa Derneği will be the lead grantee on both proposals, but will be supported through sub-agreements with BLS and LPO. The BirdLife Middle East Program Division is not a separate legal entity and is officially part of BirdLife International. The contractual arrangements for each grant (with respect to each component) are as follows:

Figure 1.



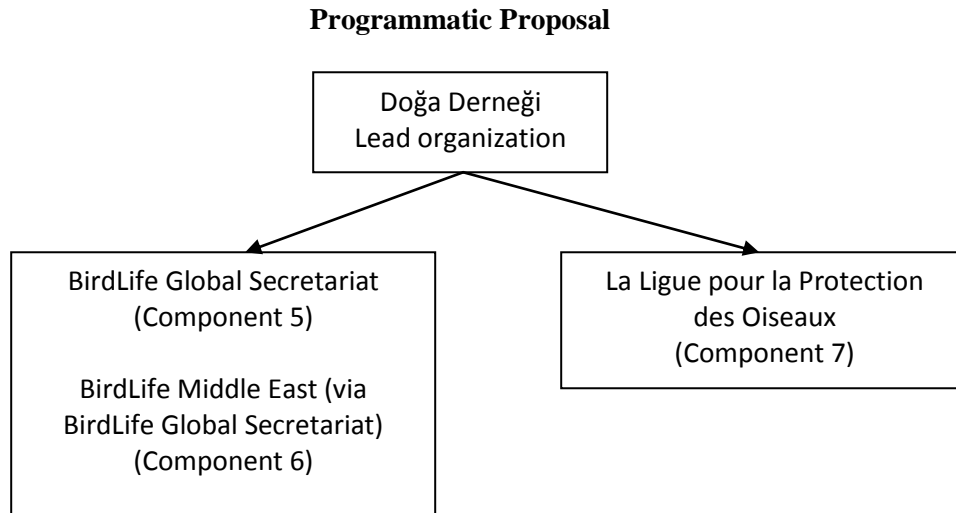
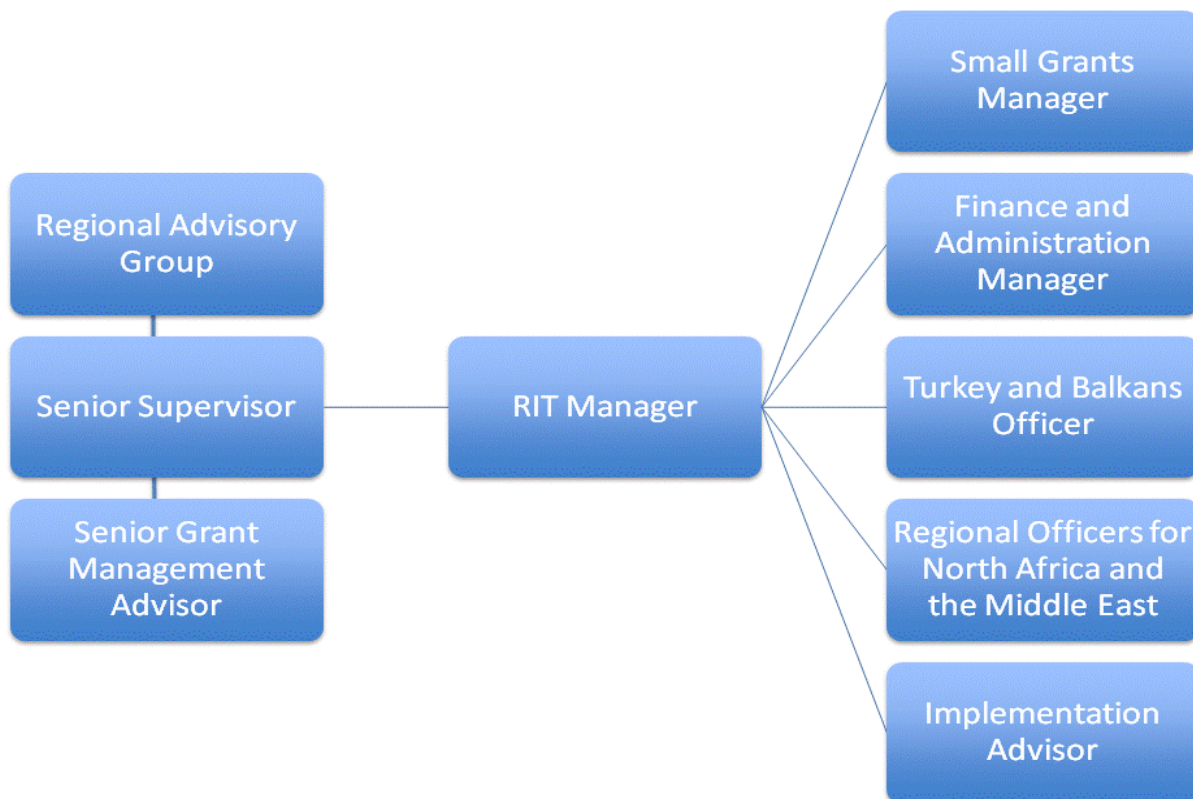


Figure 2. Management Structure of the RIT

With respect to the overall management of the RIT, Doğa Derneği has proposed the structure below.



This figure clearly depicts the oversight provided by the Regional Advisory Group in conjunction with the senior supervisor and senior grant management advisor. The management decisions provided will be translated into actions through the RIT manager and rolled out through the respective project officers for the Balkan States/Turkey, North Africa and the Middle East.

Under this structure, there is close collaboration between the core team of RIT staff based at Doğa Derneği as well as with the project officers.

Description of the Administrative Proposal

The administrative proposal focuses on establishing the RIT and coordinating the process for issuing the calls for proposals and technical review of these through the Regional Advisory Group. The overall management of the RIT will be through a core team led by the senior supervisor, based in Doğa Derneği's offices in Istanbul, Turkey. The team comprises six key staff:

1. Senior supervisor
2. RIT manager
3. Small grants manager
4. Turkey and Balkan States officer
5. Finance and administrative manager
6. Communication officer

These RIT positions are funded under both proposals to spread the costs between the two functions, but this also underscores the joint approach between the two functions. The staffing levels are discussed in detail below.

In addition, two project officers will be employed through sub-agreements between Doğa Derneği and BLME (via BirdLife Global Secretariat) and LPO to provide the extension of the RIT into the Middle East and North African regions. These project officers will provide a high degree of local knowledge of the conservation landscape and also ensure that the RIT can operate in relevant languages including Arabic, English, French and Turkish. These languages are especially important for the small grant mechanism to provide relevant assistance to community groups and grassroots organizations throughout the Mediterranean.

One component is dedicated to defining the structure and management of the small grant mechanism and another component is dedicated to reporting and monitoring using the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools (METT) and the Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT).

Description of the Programmatic Proposal

The programmatic proposal centers on communicating CEPF's investment in the Mediterranean Basin, building partnerships, forming networks, and promoting information exchange in the hotspot.

Component 5 of the programmatic proposal defines the role of the BirdLife Global Secretariat and the senior grant management advisor. This component includes the creation of a regional "donor roundtable" to pursue fundraising opportunities within the region and elsewhere. In addition, support to the RIT is provided through the implementation advisor for 1 ½ months during the first two years.

Finally there is a specific capacity building role to assist civil society organizations to apply for CEPF funds in line with the strategy defined in the ecosystem profile. Mimicking the administrative proposal, the programmatic proposal also includes components for BLME and LPO to provide assistance in building capacity of civil society organizations in the Middle East and North Africa respectively.

Timeline of the Administrative and Programmatic Proposals

The duration of the proposals was extended in response to the comments made by the Working Group concerning the timeframe of the respective grants, but not to the full extent recommended.

Both proposals are due to start on 1 December 2011. Note that the actual five-year investment period will come to close on November 30, 2016. The administrative proposal is scheduled to end on 31 March 2016, a total of four years and four months, while the Working Group had recommended five years. The programmatic proposal starts on 1 December 2011 and ends on 31 December 2015, a total of four years and one month, which more than meets the Working Group's compromise suggestion of four years.

Given that these proposals do not cover the full five years of CEPF investment in the hotspot, as recommended by the Working Group, emphasis will be placed on fundraising to obtain the funds needed to cover RIT activities for the full five years. The programmatic proposal includes provision for a donor roundtable to generate funds for the region, and this might yield additional funds for the RIT. However, the Working Group suggested that the Secretariat should have the lead role in raising the remaining necessary funds for the RIT.

Staff Detailed in the Proposals

The combined staffing levels, broken down as months, of the four organizations making up the partnership under both proposals is as follows:

Table 2. Staffing levels

Staffing	Doğa Derneği		BLME		LPO		BL Sec		Total
	Admin	Prog	Admin	Prog	Admin	Prog	Admin	Prog	
Salaries									
Senior Supervisor	3	6							9
RIT Manager	18	27							45
Small Grants Manager	36								36
Turkey and Balkan States Officer		46							46
Finance and Administrative Manager	52								52
Communication Officer	10								10
Professional Services									
Project Officer for the Middle East BLME			18	18					36
Project Officer for North Africa LPO					18	18			36
Senior Grant Management Advisor								2	2
Implementation Advisor								2	2

These monthly allocations translate into the following staffing levels throughout the life time of the RIT grants.

Table 3. Administrative proposal

ADMINISTRATION	Org	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
RIT Manager	DD		50%	42%	42%	25%	8%
Small Grants Manager	DD		100%	100%	100%		
Turkey and Balkan States Officer	DD						
Finance and Administrative Manager	DD	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	25%
Communication	DD						
Senior Supervisor	DD	100%	17%				
Project Officer for the Middle East	BLME		50%	50%	50%		
Project Officer for North Africa	LPO		50%	50%	50%		
Senior Grant Management Advisor	BL Sec						
Implementation Advisor	BL Sec						

Table 4. Programmatic proposal

PROGRAMATIC	Org	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
RIT Manager	DD		50%	58%	58%	58%
Small Grants Manager	DD					
Turkey and Balkan States Officer	DD		100%	100%	100%	83%
Finance and Administrative Manager	DD					
Communication	DD	100%	25%	25%	25%	
Senior Supervisor	DD		17%	25%	8%	
Project Officer for the Middle East	BLME		50%	50%	50%	
Project Officer for North Africa	LPO		50%	50%	50%	
Senior Grant Management Advisor	BL Sec		13%	8%		
Implementation Advisor	BL Sec		13%	13%		

It is anticipated that the bulk of the role of the RIT will occur between 2012 and 2014 and the RIT staff levels reflect this with the three project officers in DD, BLME and LPO engaged full time for all three years.

Travel

The Budget and Performance Tracker in the proposals includes costs of twice yearly trips to the respective regions. There are also annual Regional Advisory Group meetings.

Small Grant Mechanism

As requested the small grants mechanism has been consolidated under one component of the administrative proposal. This program of small grants will be managed by a dedicated manager based at Doğa Derneği's offices in Istanbul. However, the local outreach in the Balkans/Turkey, Middle East and North Africa will be undertaken by the sub-grantees and the respective project officers for each region. This will ensure that the call for proposals, review and awards can be accommodated in Arabic, English, French and Turkish languages.

Budget Summary

The budgets for both proposals have been developed bearing in mind the \$1 million maximum amount of CEPF's grants. There has been an increase in the budget from the previous submission to cover the costs of the small grants manager as requested by the CEPF Secretariat. The declining strength of the U.S. dollar has also resulted in a modest increase of the budget as some of the costs will be incurred in Euros. The detailed budgets have been attached for the Working Group's consideration.

Under the administrative proposal there are three individual budgets which pertain to Doğa Derneği's role as well as the respective components for BLME and LPO. This structure and detail provide the CEPF Secretariat with the means to track the progress of the grants against the relative spending levels.

There are four individual budgets within the programmatic proposal covering the respective roles of Doğa Derneği, BLGS, BLME and LPO.

Both budgets are presented below.

Table 5. Administrative Budget

Budget Line	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
1. Salaries/Benefits	3,400	124,800	125,928	120,000	70,032	35,602	479,762
2. Professional Services	6,000	64,700	59,862	59,214	238	4,764	194,778
3. Rent and Storage	225	6,120	6,487	6,876	3,216	852	23,777
4. Telecommunications	-	1,500	1,590	1,685	-	-	4,775
5. Postage and Delivery	-	240	254	270	-	-	764
6. Supplies	822	1,148	636	674	-	-	3,280
7. Furniture and Equipment	7,900	5,650	-	-	-	-	13,550
8. Maintenance	-	240	254	270	-	-	764
9. Travel	-	37,972	38,901	35,231	25,634	8,642	146,379
10. Meetings and Special Events	900	2,354	4,721	2,645	2,804	3,856	17,279
11. Miscellaneous	-	960	1,018	1,079	1,143	404	4,604
Sub Total	19,247	245,684	239,652	227,944	103,066	54,119	889,713
Indirect Costs	2,502	29,778	29,038	27,471	13,344	7,036	109,168
Project TOTAL	21,749	275,462	268,690	255,415	116,410	61,155	998,880

Table 6. Programmatic Budget

Budget Line	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Totals
1. Salaries/Benefits	4,000	100,800	113,208	120,000	102,427	440,436
2. Professional Services	1,000	94,117	100,273	69,753	5,050	270,193
3. Rent and Storage	150	6,338	6,323	5,865	3,930	22,606
4. Telecommunications	-	2,013	1,953	1,685	-	5,651
5. Postage and Delivery	-	240	254	270	-	764
6. Supplies	822	600	636	674	-	2,732
7. Furniture and Equipment	4,500	500	-	-	-	5,000
8. Maintenance	-	240	254	270	-	764
9. Travel	-	17,765	10,382	9,511	9,966	47,624
10. Meetings and Special Events	-	1,500	-	-	-	1,500
11. Miscellaneous	-	960	1,018	1,079	1,143	4,200
Sub Total	10,472	225,073	234,301	209,107	122,517	801,470
Indirect Costs	1,361	26,602	27,878	25,233	15,846	96,919
Project TOTAL	11,833	251,674	262,179	234,340	138,363	898,389

The budgets have been reviewed by the CEPF Secretariat and overall the Secretariat believes these budgets are realistic given the demands of the RIT role. The salary levels are within the established range for the core staff of the RIT employed by Doğa Derneği. In addition, the budgets for the project officers for the Middle East and North Africa are reasonable. The travel budget is as reasonable as possible as the RIT have proposed to rely heavily on electronic media to communicate. However, it does include funds for bringing the Regional Advisory Group together annually at the same time as the Donor Roundtable, as these gatherings are considered key to implementing the strategy. All other budget lines are also within an acceptable range.

Finally, indirect costs represent 12 percent of the total budget overall. This budget line covers costs such as input from information technology professionals and legal and human resource teams in the respective organizations.

Conclusion

It is the opinion of the CEPF Secretariat that the two proposals submitted have been significantly improved based upon the comments received from the Working Group. In revising the respective roles and responsibilities under each proposal, the distinction between the administrative and programmatic functions has been clarified.

The administrative proposal establishes a robust team housed by Doğa Derneği in Istanbul that will effectively and efficiently manage the day-to-day operations to ensure that CEPF's funds are accessible to all sectors of society and that grants will be awarded in line with strategic directions and investment priorities stated in the ecosystem profile. In addition to the Balkan/Turkey project officer, the partnership with BLME and LPO will provide the RIT with the ability to extend their reach into the Middle East and North African countries and to be able to support nascent civil society organizations as the region emerges from the recent political turmoil.

The programmatic proposal goes beyond the technical, communication and capacity building roles and presents the potential to create a unique entity within the Mediterranean Basin: the Donor Roundtable that would act as vector for other organizations to seek assistance and advice as to how best to achieve conservation and sustainable development objectives.

One factor that is of concern is that funds will have to be raised to ensure that both proposals can continue until the end of the full five-year investment period that ends on November 30, 2016. The RIT and the Secretariat will have to devote efforts to fundraising to achieve this goal.

Finally, these two proposals, taken in combination, represent the most effective means for CEPF to roll out the investment across the region, achieve the goals stated in the ecosystem profile, and create the opportunity to channel other investments that will support conservation and sustainable development throughout the region.