

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot
Request for Proposals
Preparation and Delivery of Ecosystem Profile**

Opening date: 8 February 2016

Closing date: 21 March 2016

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

1. Invitation

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International (CI), the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. CEPF is a global program that provides grants to civil society to safeguard the world's biodiversity hotspots. CI, as one of the global donor partners of CEPF, hosts the Secretariat of the Fund.

The CEPF Secretariat requires an organization to lead the preparation of an Ecosystem Profile – defined in the ensuing document – for the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot. Qualified organizations or consortia are invited to submit a proposal by the closing date listed above, in compliance with this Request for Proposals (RfP) and the scope of work described here.

The result of this request for proposals will be the issuance of a grant between Conservation International and a single lead organization, which in turn, may have subordinate partners if it so proposes.

Proposals must be submitted electronically to cepfgrants@conservation.org by the closing date listed above.

2. Background

CEPF invests in biodiversity hotspots. Investment consists of an approximately one-year design process, resulting in an Ecosystem Profile, followed by an implementation period of grant making to civil society organizations of at least five years. Since 2001, CEPF has invested in 24 hotspots to which each has been allocated approximately between \$5 million and \$10 million for granting. In January 2016, the CEPF Donor Council approved the Mountains of Central Asia for profiling and investment.

The Mountains of Central Asia cover parts of the following seven countries.

1. Kyrgyzstan
2. Tajikistan
3. Kazakhstan
4. Uzbekistan
5. China
6. Afghanistan
7. Turkmenistan

In total, the area is roughly 860,000 square kilometers. It is home to iconic and endangered species like the snow leopard, saiga antelope, and Marco Polo sheep, which roam among some of the world's highest mountains. The hotspot is a global center of cultivars for domesticated crops, including apple, pear, peach, apricot, cherry, walnut, and tulip. Glacial waters from the high Kyrgyz and Tajik mountains flow through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan into the Aral Sea and are the main source of drinking water, irrigation, and hydropower for the entire region

Beginning in early 2016, CEPF intends to develop an Ecosystem Profile and included investment strategy for the Mountains of Central Asia as a guide to future grant making to civil society groups working in the region. This will require an extensive consultation process to define biological priorities for conservation action, document the context in which conservation must take place, and identify priority actions for strengthening and engaging civil society in biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development, as seen by stakeholders in the region. The consultation process will be characterized by a bottom-up approach, capturing the perspectives, priorities and capacity development needs of local stakeholders, such as grassroots NGOs and community groups, as well as of government, the agriculture industry, the private sector, donors, and international civil society stakeholders.

The results of this process will be presented in a document entitled the *Ecosystem Profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot*, which sets out a situational analysis, based upon a review of biodiversity priorities, threats, policy environment, civil society context, and patterns of conservation investment by other funders, and presents a stakeholder-agreed-upon geographic and thematic investment strategy. In this context, the Ecosystem Profile is both a **document** and a **process**. The organization that leads this effort will deliver the final document, but must produce it in a way that ensures stakeholder consultation and agreement. A good Ecosystem Profile will begin building partnerships and momentum well before CEPF makes its first grants in the region.

In short, the Ecosystem Profile will be a snapshot of the hotspot in 2016 that describes the state of, and threats to, biodiversity and the capacity of civil society to engage as a partner in conservation. The Ecosystem Profile:

1. Secures broad-based scientific agreement on the biological priorities for conservation.
2. Describes socioeconomic factors that drive threats to natural resources.
3. Provides an overview of civil society as a potential partner in conservation.
4. Defines the CEPF niche and investment strategy.
5. Defines the baseline biological indicators related to biodiversity, threats, and civil society against which the grant portfolio will be monitored.

The CEPF Donor Council expects to review and approve the final Ecosystem Profile by the first quarter of 2017. At that time, the Donor Council will also approve a total amount to invest in the region and an investment period of at least five years. The amount that the Donor Council allocates is, in part, based on the arguments presented in the Ecosystem Profile. Based on this calendar and other elements of CEPF operations in a region, grant-making would begin soon thereafter.

2.1. Conservation Outcomes and Key Biodiversity Areas

All CEPF Ecosystem Profiles are built around the concepts of conservation outcomes and key biodiversity areas. Conservation outcomes are the entire set of conservation targets in a hotspot that need to be achieved in order to prevent species extinctions and biodiversity loss.

The CEPF funding niche and strategy will be based upon these outcomes, firstly to ensure that CEPF investments are directed at relevant projects, and secondly to enable measurement of the success of conservation investments.

Conservation outcomes exist at three scales representing (1) the globally threatened species within the region, (2) the sites that sustain them (the key biodiversity areas, or KBAs), and (3) the landscapes necessary to maintain the ecological and evolutionary processes upon which those sites depend. In CEPF terminology, these outcomes are “Extinctions Avoided,” “Areas Protected” and “Corridors Created.” In defining outcomes at the species, site, and corridor levels, CEPF aims to identify targets that are quantitative, justifiable, and repeatable. CEPF will not try to achieve all of these targets through its funding, but its investment niche and strategy will address a subset of them.

Defining the outcomes is a necessary part of the Ecosystem Profile preparation. The process of defining KBAs should follow the IUCN Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas, which will be provided to the team.

2.2. Focus of the Profile

The Ecosystem Profile is built around a biodiversity hotspot, which by definition in this case, covers parts of seven countries. The Ecosystem Profile should address the entire hotspot. That being said, limited time, money, availability of data, and other factors will prevent the profile document from addressing every subject with equal depth for each country, and will prevent the team from engaging stakeholders equally in each country. Given the uneven distribution of the hotspot among countries, CEPF expects:

1. The team will conduct extensive consultation with stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, and the Profile document will address the situation in these countries in depth.
2. Stakeholder consultation in China and Uzbekistan might not be as extensive as the above, but the Profile document will give appropriate discussion to the situation in these countries.
3. No in-country consultation is expected in Afghanistan or Turkmenistan. The team will conduct a desk review of existing sources to discuss these countries in the Profile document.

Applicants should be clear in their proposals how, and to what degree, they will conduct stakeholder consultations in each country.

3. Eligibility and Exclusions

CEPF will accept proposals from any qualified organization anywhere in the world, including non-government organizations, private consulting groups, and both public and private universities. 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) is not able to assert a claim of sovereign immunity.

Organizations may choose to form a team, or consortium, for the purposes of submitting a proposal. If a consortium is submitting a proposal in response to this RfP, 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.

The organization, or organizational members of a consortium, that prepares the Ecosystem Profile will **not** be precluded from bidding on grants during the subsequent implementation period.

4. Period of Performance

The period of performance is anticipated to be from 1 April 2016 through 30 June 2017.

5. Place of Performance

The place of performance is any relevant location within the Mountains of Central Asia hotspot, Europe, or the locations of major international donors or agencies working in the region. The assignment will include travel to Brussels for meetings at project inception and to CEPF headquarters in Metropolitan Washington, D.C., USA to present a draft of the Ecosystem Profile to CEPF donors.

6. Budget

The total budget that CEPF will allocate for this award, inclusive of all taxes, management support costs, or other indirect costs, is US\$300,000 (three hundred thousand United States dollars).

7. Solicitation, Review, and Award

The CEPF Secretariat is responsible for the analysis of applications, selection of the top-ranked consortium, and negotiation with the top-ranked consortium leading to the award of a grant in accord with CEPF's grant-making procedures.

8. Supervision by the CEPF Secretariat

The selected team will report to the CEPF Secretariat. The Secretariat will provide both direct and ultimate guidance to the team.

9. Scope of Work

9.1. Ecosystem Profile – Detailed Document

The Ecosystem Profile will be drafted in English and adhere to the structure below. During the drafting process, the Profile team will prepare drafts and summaries in Russian, as well, for appropriate government personnel and stakeholders in each of the countries. The team will prepare the final document in professionally edited English for the CEPF Donor Council, and upon approval of that document, will prepare a professionally edited Russian translation.

Chapter	Approximate Page Length*
Chapter 1. Introduction	2
Chapter 2. Background	4
Chapter 3. Biological Importance of the Hotspot	20
Chapter 4. Conservation Outcomes Defined for the Hotspot	15
Chapter 5. Socioeconomic Context of the Hotspot	10
Chapter 6. Policy Context of the Hotspot	20
Chapter 7. Civil Society Context of the Hotspot	25
Chapter 8. Threats to Biodiversity in the Hotspot	15
Chapter 9. Climate Change Assessment	10
Chapter 10. Assessment of Current Conservation Investment	15
Chapter 11. CEPF Niche for Investment	2
Chapter 12. CEPF Investment Strategy and Programmatic Focus (including Logical Framework table)	25
Chapter 13. Sustainability	3
Total	166
References	tbd
Appendices	tbd

* Page count does not include tables or figures.

The Ecosystem Profile is an original document. It is composed essentially of two sections. The first section consists of Chapters 1-10, which address the whole of the hotspot. These chapters form the basis for the prioritization and strategy which are comprised in the second section, consisting of Chapters 11-13. The second section focuses only on those sites and corridors that are prioritized, also referred to as the geographic priorities for CEPF investment.

Chapter 1. Introduction. This chapter describes the conservation imperative for the hotspot, introduces CEPF as a global program and gives a general overview of the hotspot. It describes the approach, conservation outcomes tool, and strategy development.

Map: This chapter will include a map of the hotspot.

Chapter 2. Background. This chapter describes the process behind the development of the profile, the stakeholder meetings, the donor consultations, and the partners involved.

Table: Dates and participant lists for all stakeholder workshops.

Chapter 3. Biological Importance of the Hotspot. This chapter describes the geography, climate, and biological history of the hotspot. The chapter will provide a summary of species diversity, levels of endemism, and global threat status among major taxonomic groups in the hotspot. The focus will be on the taxonomic groups for which data on global threat status are available. This chapter also describes major ecosystem services, including freshwater flows, support to food production, support to cultural services, carbon sequestration, and disaster mitigation, among others.

Table: species diversity, endemism, and global threat in the hotspot, by taxonomic group.

Table: principal ecosystem services.

Chapter 4. Conservation Outcomes Defined for the Hotspot. This chapter describes and summarizes the conservation outcomes for the hotspot. Conservation outcomes represent the quantifiable set of species (i.e., globally threatened species), sites (i.e., KBAs), and higher-scale spatial units (i.e., corridors, landscapes) that are indispensable to conserving the global biodiversity values of the hotspot.

1. Species outcomes will be based on a comprehensive list of globally threatened species occurring in the hotspot, corresponding to categories critical (CR), endangered (EN), and vulnerable (VU) on the current IUCN Red List.
2. Site outcomes will be based on a comprehensive list, with accompanying maps, of KBAs for the hotspot, comprising all sites that meet the criteria defined in the IUCN Standard on KBAs that can be identified based upon available information.
3. Corridor outcomes will be based on a comprehensive list, with accompanying maps, of higher-scale spatial units necessary to maintain ecological and evolutionary processes at the landscape scale. Within this context, the chapter summarizes the ecosystem services provided by the natural ecosystems of the hotspot and describes their social and economic value. The text relates the importance of conservation corridors to the provision of specific ecosystem services.

The chapter will prioritize species, site, and corridor outcomes based upon explicit criteria agreed upon in advance by CEPF and the Ecosystem Profile team. This analysis will, with the other chapters in the document, form the basis for defining the CEPF niche (Chapter 11). In general, species outcomes should be prioritized on the basis of criteria including global threat status, relative importance of the hotspot for the global conservation of the species, and need for species-focused conservation action. Site outcomes (i.e. KBAs) should be prioritized following the methodology presented in the IUCN Standard on KBAs. Corridor outcomes should be prioritized on the basis of criteria including importance for wide-ranging (landscape) species, importance for the delivery of ecosystem services, and relative degree of habitat fragmentation¹.

This chapter should be specific about the relevance of improved human well-being as a determinant and result of positive conservation outcomes.

This chapter should also make specific links between Conservation Outcomes and relevant indicators in the CEPF Monitoring Framework, including CEPF indicators 1, 4, 5, 8, and 18.

Map: KBAs in the hotspot.

Map: corridor outcomes for the hotspot.

Table: summary of globally threatened species in the hotspot.

¹. Conservation corridors are defined wherever it is considered necessary that connectivity be maintained between two or more KBAs in order to meet the long-term conservation needs of landscape species. Then, additional conservation corridors are defined wherever it is considered necessary to increase the area of actual or potential natural habitat in order to maintain evolutionary and ecological processes. In the latter case, the definition of conservation corridors is largely subjective, due to limitations of time, paucity of relevant data, and absence of detailed criteria. Given these limitations, emphasis is placed on maintaining continuums of natural habitat across environmental gradients, particularly altitudinal gradients, in order to maintain such ecological processes as seasonal altitudinal migration and to provide a safeguard against the potential impacts of climate change. Conservation corridors are defined through consultation with local experts, complemented by analysis of spatial data on land cover, elevation and human population distribution, and consideration of the results of previous landscape-scale conservation planning exercises.

Table: KBAs of highest biological priority (name, island, protection status, size, current annual funding).

Table: Protected Areas in the Hotspot.

Table: Summary of Globally Threatened Species (species outcomes) in the Hotspot.

Table: Summary of Key Biodiversity Areas (site outcomes) in the Hotspot.

Table: Summary of Conservation Corridors (corridor outcomes) in the Hotspot.

Geo-referenced data sets: Data sets used as the basis for the above.

Suitable data sources: IUCN Red List, World Database on Protected Areas; Alliance for Zero Extinction; World Biodiversity Database.

Data collected by the team for this chapter will be submitted to Conservation International's GIS and cartography experts, who will then use the information to prepare a *Conservation Outcomes* wall map. The team must submit the following as appendices to this chapter.

1. GIS layer of KBA polygons with attributes
2. GIS layer of conservation corridors
3. Species-site matrix (in Excel) listing KBA trigger species (and other features) for each KBA

CEPF advises that Chapter 4 be drafted early in the process so that authors of subsequent chapters (e.g., on policy, on civil society) can tailor their work to be focused on the specific conservation outcomes.

Chapter 5. Socioeconomic Context of the Hotspot. This chapter provides an overview of the socioeconomic situation of the hotspot, an analysis of how this affects conservation outcomes, and how it could influence the strategic directions for CEPF actions. The chapter should provide information and analysis on population, including demographics, migration and distribution trends (e.g., urban versus rural; state to state), and ethnic and indigenous distinctions, if relevant. The chapter should also discuss relevant social and economic facts, including poverty and welfare distribution, economic activities as they relate to natural resource use (e.g., agriculture, energy, fisheries, mining, forestry, tourism), and linguistic/social/religious distinctions if they have relevance to civil society engagement and/or conservation. As relevant, there should be discussion of youth and underprivileged as either relate to conservation. There must be a distinct section on gender.

This chapter should not only include a general discussion of the private and agro-industrial sectors, but should be specific about the major actors and what they represent as either threats or partners in conservation.

It is important to note that the chapter is about the hotspot, not the whole of each of the seven countries. (For example, the chapter should present demographic information for the portion of China in the hotspot, not the whole country.)

This chapter should also make specific links between the socioeconomic context of the hotspot and relevant indicators in the CEPF Monitoring Framework, including CEPF Indicators 9 and 10.

Tables: Multiple tables as relevant by sub-region, including those on key human and development statistics, demographic trends, active population share in main economic sectors, ecological

footprint, rates of land use change, or relevant information on economic sectors that affect natural resources.

Chapter 6. Policy Context of the Hotspot. This chapter reviews and analyzes policies related to the environment with special emphasis on natural resources management and biodiversity conservation. The text reviews the political situation in each of the countries (or appropriate sub-regions), details economic development policies and strategies, and assesses how the policy context affects biodiversity conservation and could influence the Strategic Directions and modalities for CEPF investment. The chapter should provide:

1. The legal status of sites and corridors; that is, who owns them or which public agency is responsible for their management.
2. Overview on governance structures, level of decentralization, political conflicts, and security issues.
3. Overview on national, provincial, or other policies in relation to natural resources management (e.g., policies on protected areas, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, mining, wildlife management, road construction, housing, urban development).
4. Overview on the institutional policy framework for conservation, including description of the mandates and capacity of principal agencies and authorities, biodiversity action plans, major national laws, and international conventions.
5. Overview on other policies and regulations related to the financing of conservation, including taxes, protected area revenue streams, licensing for resource use, and the creation of trust funds.
6. Overview on national, provincial, or other economic development policies in relation in terms of their effect on biodiversity conservation. Include also an overview of the laws on local governance as they relate to the control of natural resource areas (e.g., forestry, agriculture).
7. Overview of political conditions and trends at national, provincial, or local scales as they relate to conservation (e.g., political parties, leadership, popular movements) as well as international issues (e.g., the countries' relationships with each other or other major actors in the region – Russia, India, Pakistan, the Gulf States, the United States –having a disproportionate effect on natural resource use).
8. Overview on National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of each country.
9. This chapter should also make specific links between the policy context of the hotspot and relevant indicators in the CEPF Monitoring Framework (Indicator 13) and/or establish some form of baseline data against which to measure future progress in relation to policy.

Chapter 7. Civil Society Context of the Hotspot. Civil society is the recipient of CEPF grants and as such, is CEPF's implementing agent. A tenet of CEPF is that effective and sustainable conservation is better achieved with the engagement of civil society. This chapter must provide an extensive examination of primary and potential civil society actors and their potential direct or indirect role in conservation.

For the purposes of this chapter, CEPF defines civil society as all the national and international non-government actors that are relevant to the achievement of the conservation outcomes and strategic directions. This includes, at least, local and international conservation NGOs; economic and community development NGOs; scientific/research/academic institutions (including local universities); professional organizations; producer and sales associations; religious organizations; media; advocacy groups; outreach/education/awareness groups; formal and informal schools; social welfare agencies;

indigenous groups and indigenous rights groups; land reform groups; and the parts of the private sector concerned with the sustainable use of natural resources.

The chapter should:

1. Describe the efforts of major conservation and development organizations, by name.
2. Distill the efforts of smaller groups by various classifications or geographic locales.
3. Describe formal and informal networks of civil society actors and their work.
4. Analyze the capacity (human resources, technical, financial) of different types of groups as this varies by location (e.g., by country), or focus area (e.g., community development, terrestrial management, water resources).
5. Analyze the operating environment for civil society in terms of legal framework, political space, funding availability, ability to register or convene a group, receive funding, report on income, or manage KBAs; and describe variations of these within sub-regions of the hotspot.
6. Describe gaps in the civil society framework (e.g., by location or issue) to inform whether the CEPF strategy will directly address these gaps or purposefully work around them.

This chapter should also make specific links between the civil society context of the hotspot and relevant indicators in the CEPF Monitoring Framework, including Indicators 20, 21, 22, and 23. CEPF Indicator 21, in particular, attempts to measure the “collective civil society capacity” at a hotspot, national, or appropriate sub-national scale. The Profile team should use a CEPF-provided measurement and descriptive tool to assess and define a baseline for this “collective capacity.”

Chapter 8. Threats to Biodiversity in the Hotspot. This chapter is a study on threats to biodiversity and their drivers in the hotspot. This chapter should include, at minimum, the following:

1. Assessment of the threats and root causes of threats that directly affect the conservation outcomes and the ecosystem's integrity, as well as a brief historic overview thereof.
2. Description of the possible solutions to overcome or at least mitigate the root causes of these threats.
3. Discussion of specific threats confronting specific species, sites, and corridors listed in the conservation outcomes chapter, to assist in the development of the CEPF strategy.
4. Description the principal actors involved and how these should change to support biodiversity conservation in the area (both threat actors and opportunity actors.)
5. Appropriate quantification or qualification of threats in order to establish some form of baseline data against which to measure future progress in relation to threat reduction.

This chapter should make specific links to CEPF Global Indicators 2, 3, 6, and 7.

Chapter 9. Climate Change Assessment. This chapter should include, at minimum, the following:

1. Overview of hotspot's climatic history and how this has shaped the biota.
2. Overview of projected impacts of climate change on human populations and biodiversity.
3. Description of the potential climate mitigation and adaption opportunities in the hotspot, including adequacy of the protected area systems to promote resiliency.
4. Review of policy responses, including major climate change initiatives, the extent to which climate change analyses and policies are in place for adaption and mitigation, and their efficacy in integrating biodiversity considerations and potential future needs.
5. Overview of the role of civil society in advancing climate change adaption and mitigation to date and key bottlenecks to their constructive engagement and potential responses.

6. Recommendations for strengthening policies and approaches for adaptation and mitigation for conservation and ecosystem service resiliency, with emphasis on fostering civil society engagement.
7. Potential impacts of the human response to climate change on protected areas, natural areas and biodiversity (e.g., displaced populations due to sea level rise or droughts, increased dependency on natural resources).

Chapter 10. Assessment of Current Conservation Investment. This chapter considers “conservation investment” to be both investment directly in such elements as creation of protected areas and restoration of natural ecosystems, as well as investment in economic development activities and local governance that effect proposed conservation outcomes. As such, the chapter needs to discuss the work of traditional economic development funders and actors, or lack thereof, as it influences CEPF’s niche for investment.

Further, the chapter needs to describe the work of the GEF small grants programme in each country and funding by other foundations (e.g., Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) that have or are planning investments in the region.

This chapter should further include the following, at a minimum:

1. Detail major efforts that have been or are being undertaken for biodiversity conservation in the hotspot by national, international, bilateral, public, and private sector actors.
2. Quantify levels of funding already provided by those actors.
3. Qualify where and why existing activities and investments are deemed to be insufficient or ineffective.
4. Distinguish between funding for formal public sector agencies as opposed to civil society.
5. Provide specific detail on funding provided by CEPF’s donors in relation to conservation.
6. Discuss the relevance/role of donor funds for other sectors as it relates to biodiversity conservation (e.g., infrastructure projects that include environmental impacts; public sector reform projects that strengthen the capacity or change the role of environmental management authorities; decentralization programs that change the role of local authorities in relation to natural resource management; education or health programs that affect local behavior).
7. Map relationships between donors.
8. Identify function and incipient sustainable financing mechanisms (e.g., trust funds, debt swaps).
9. Identify gaps in conservation funding with respect to the conservation outcomes.
10. Distinguish between funding that might be provided for conservation in any of the seven countries, as a whole, but not for the Mountains of Central Asia, and distinguish between funding that might be provided for economic development, as a whole, but not for conservation.

This chapter should make specific links to CEPF Global Indicators 14, 15, 16, and 17.

Chapter 11. CEPF Niche for Investment. Based on the preceding description of the conservation outcomes and investment context, this chapter identifies how CEPF investment will complement (and build upon) investments by other funders discussed in Chapter 10 and in relation to the needs and opportunities described in Chapters 4-9. The niche presages the Investment Strategy (Chapter 12) by implying the types of activities for which grant funding will be provided, the types of organizations to receive this funding, and the geographic focus of this work.

Chapter 12. CEPF Investment Strategy and Programmatic Focus. Based on the niche for CEPF investment, this chapter recommends specific Investment Priorities grouped into broad Strategic Directions. These are areas where CEPF can add most value or complement existing investments in biodiversity conservation, justified in terms of the current context for conservation, past experience with conservation initiatives, and opportunities to complement and build upon current conservation investment.

See Annex 1 for criteria for prioritizing KBAs for investment.

The CEPF Investment Strategy will include a Logical Framework which incorporates CEPF's global indicators and relevant indicators specific to the hotspot in relation to the strategic directions and investment priorities. It is a distillation of CEPF's objectives for its grants in the hotspot and is used throughout the five year investment period as a portfolio monitoring tool. The logical framework is a negotiated and realistic set of outcomes in relation to amount of money allocated by the Donor Council and, ideally, leveraged through regional donors.

Targets in the logical framework should be framed by the Aichi Targets of the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Table: CEPF strategic directions and investment priorities for the hotspot.

Table: Priority KBAs and corridors in the hotspot.

Map: Priority KBAs and corridors in the hotspot.

Table: Logical Framework with top-level objectives, targets, means of verification, and important assumptions and lower-level intermediate outcomes, intermediate indicators, means of verification, and important assumptions.

Chapter 13. Sustainability. This chapter describes how the proposed strategic directions will result in sustainable conservation outcomes.

References. Include complete citations for all references in the profile.

Appendices. Suggested appendices include:

1. IUCN Red List species and priority species in the hotspot. (CEPF Global Indicator 1.)
2. All KBAs in the hotspot, number of hectares, and protection status. (CEPF Global Indicator 4 and 5.)
3. All corridors in the hotspot.
4. Biological prioritizations (i.e., scoring or ranking) of species, sites, and corridors.
5. Ecosystem services and their contribution to economic development in the hotspot.
6. List of relevant civil society groups in the hotspot.
7. Major current external and internal investments in conservation in the hotspot.
8. Baseline list of policies and laws requiring enactment or improvement as evidence of change. (CEPF Global Indicator 13.)
9. Baseline list of financing mechanisms in existing – or identified gaps – with assessment of available US dollars for funding. (CEPF Global Indicator 14 and 15.)
10. Baseline assessment of civil society capacity per qualitative CEPF measuring tool. (CEPF Global Indicator 21.)
11. Baseline list of existing networks or partnerships – or identified gaps – requiring improvement as evidence of change. (CEPF Global indicator 22.)

12. Baseline assessment of “responsiveness to emerging issues” per qualitative CEPF measuring tool. (CEPF Global Indicator 23.)
13. Additional baseline data to monitor the hotspot for CEPF Global Indicators in terms of threats to biodiversity, status of human well-being, and economic development.

9.2. Ecosystem Profile – Executive Summary Document

The Executive Summary will be 30 pages in length, inclusive of maps and tables, in English, with a separate Russian translation. It will be drafted and presented, in English, concurrent with the first formal draft detailed Profile presented to the Working Group. It will be revised when presented to the Donor Council and revised as a final version to parallel the final Profile. The final version must then be translated into Russian. Whereas the detailed Profile is intended for managers and as a reference document, the summary Profile is intended for executives and host-country decision-makers, particularly GEF Operational Focal Points for whom Russian is the preferred language.

9.3. Ecosystem Profile – Communication Document

The team will produce a 16-page booklet (cover-to-cover), in English, summarizing the Ecosystem Profile in a graphic-intensive manner that is minimally reliant upon narrative text. It should make extensive use of maps, summary tables, and informative graphics that are easy for a layperson to understand.

9.4. Ecosystem Profile Process

CEPF intends that the drafting of the Ecosystem Profile document be much more than a research and writing project. Rather, it is a process of engagement and consensus-building among host-country agency partners, donors, and civil society actors with the result being a document that has broad-based support. In order to accomplish this, the selected team is expected to propose and complete the following:

1. Participate in 1-2 day briefing/launch meeting with CEPF Secretariat personnel, most likely to be held in Brussels.
2. Participate in one-day scoping meeting with representatives of CEPF’s global donors in Brussels.
3. Convene regular management meetings of principal authors and contributors to the document and process.
4. Determine and then convene, either in person or virtually, an appropriate senior advisory body or set of advisors. Ideally, this includes one or more GEF Operational Focal Points from primary countries (named at http://www.thegef.org/gef/focal_points_list), leading members of international and local civil society, the private or agricultural sector, and selected donor representatives.
5. Engage directly, either in person or in writing, with GEF Operational Focal Points in order to secure their endorsement of the Profile.
6. Organize and hold launch events or meetings with key government, private sector, agriculture industry actors, donor, and civil society stakeholders to describe the timeline and purpose of this overall exercise.
7. Organize and hold a series of stakeholder consultation meetings in various locations within the hotspot or around different themes, based on expert input papers or draft chapters of the profile, that seek local inputs into the CEPF investment strategy and that build a common vision

for conservation in the hotspot. (Proposals should specify the number, locations and themes of planned meetings, the approximate dates, and expected participants).

8. Organize and hold a final consultation meeting with key senior stakeholders that presents the draft geographic and species priorities, Strategic Directions, and Investment Priorities.
9. Under the guidance of the CEPF Secretariat, prepare a full draft of the Ecosystem Profile for review by the CEPF donor's Working Group.
10. With the CEPF Secretariat, revise the draft to respond to Working Group comments.
11. Send one individual to Metropolitan Washington, D.C. to present the final draft Ecosystem Profile to the CEPF Working Group.

Further to Section 2.2, CEPF recognizes that with limited funds for this exercise, and given the challenges of government engagement or access to civil society in certain parts of the hotspot, the methods and depth of consultation will vary by country. The Profile team should be prepared to use phone, electronic mail, or virtual methods to engage with some stakeholders.

The Profile Team must consider that stakeholders extend beyond traditional conservation actors – that is, environmental NGOs, research institutions and universities, government agency protected area authorities, and donor representatives with an individual conservation remit – to include the major development, private sector, and agro-industrial actors in the Mountains of Central Asia. Absence of appropriate consultation with the variety of economic development actors influencing conservation in the Mountains of Central Asia will be considered non-performance by the team.

9.5. Summary of Management Implications of the Profile and Investment Strategy

As a deliverable separate from the Ecosystem Profile, the team should prepare a document of four pages in length that reflects on the implications of the Investment Strategy (Chapter 13) in relation to CEPF's standard mode of operation. Whereas the Ecosystem Profile and Summary become public documents, this document on management implications will remain confidential with the Secretariat.

Over five to seven years, a typical CEPF portfolio consists of fifty "core" grants for \$125,000 of two years in duration and fifty "small" grants for \$20,000 of one year in duration. CEPF's "ideal" grantee is a local NGO, although international NGOs are eligible and often receive funding. CEPF awards grants directly to core grantees: grant agreements are in English and between Conservation International and the grantee; and grant funds flow directly in U.S. dollars from Conservation International in the United States to the grantee account overseas.

In any portfolio, CEPF engages a lead organization, called the Regional Implementation Team (RIT), to assist with awards and supervision of core grantees, as well as for capacity building and government and private sector engagement. The CEPF Secretariat awards a block of money, called the small grants fund, to the RIT. The RIT executes agreements with small grantees (i.e., those receiving \$20,000 or less), may make agreements in local languages, and may disburse funds in any appropriate currency.

The four-page summary referenced here should consider this methodology in relation to the Investment Strategy. In particular, the Profile team should answer the following questions:

1. Are all seven countries targeted equally, or more likely, is there a concentration within fewer areas?
2. Within the target areas, is there a viable civil society?

3. Are grantee organizations widely capable of working in English, and if not, in what languages will the RIT need to be fluent?
4. Is it legal for a U.S. organization (i.e., Conservation International) to send funds to civil society in the target sites?
5. Do civil society groups in the target regions need any special permit, type of registration, type of bank account, or other authorization to receive foreign funds or engage with a foreign donor?
6. Are there particular areas of concern for the physical safety of putative grantees, the RIT, CEPF Secretariat, or its donors?
7. Are there particular areas of concern regarding financial or managerial accountability and transparency of putative grantees?

9.6. Timeframe, Milestones, Deliverables, and Payment Schedule *(to be finalized upon grant award)*

This timeframe below, up until the submission of the first draft, is illustrative and should guide applicants. After the submission of the first draft, applicants should view the timing and actions as static and defined by the formal review and revision process required by the CEPF Working Group and Donor Council. The timeframe, milestones, and deliverables will become a formal part of the grant agreement with the selected applicants.

Payment will occur upon inception, quarterly thereafter, and upon completion, subject to the submission of deliverables and acceptance by CEPF.

Applicants should propose an indicative payment schedule, per the below, that reflects the anticipated cash demands implied in their budgets. Actual quarterly payments will be made based on an acceptable cash flow projection indicating cash on-hand and anticipated expenses for the upcoming quarter. Only expenses for actual, reasonable, and documented costs as authorized in the approved budget will be allowed.

Invoice	Date	Deliverable	Amount (USD)
1	1-May-16	No deliverable / agreement signature	\$30,000
	5-May-16	1. Electronic announcement of the ecosystem profile process 2. List of key participant stakeholders and draft stakeholder analysis 3. Draft schedule of planned stakeholder workshops	
	15-Jun-16	4. Draft list of globally threatened species in Mountains of Central Asia (KBA trigger species) 5. Draft analysis of threats to biodiversity 6. List of members of Senior Advisory Group or presentation of advisory scheme 7. Final schedule and agenda for all stakeholder workshops	
2	30-Jun-16	Invoice for period of May-June 2016	<i>tbd</i>
	1-Aug-16	8. Draft analysis of conservation outcomes	
3	30-Sep-16	Invoice for period of July-September 2016	<i>tbd</i>
	1-Nov-16	9. Full draft of Ecosystem Profile per SOW Item 9.1, in English (i.e., "Draft 1, submitted for CEPF Secretariat review") 10. Summary proceedings of all stakeholder and Senior Advisory workshops (i.e., date, location, agenda, final participant list, photos, and 500 word summary or bulleted list of stakeholder feedback or major outputs)	
4	31-Dec-16	Invoice for period of October-December 2016	<i>tbd</i>
	6-Jan-17	11. Revised Ecosystem Profile per Secretariat comments, in English (i.e., "Draft 2, submitted for CEPF Technical Working Group review")	
	1-Mar-17	12. Revised Ecosystem Profile per Working Group written comments, in English ("Draft 3, submitted in advance of presentation to CEPF Technical Working Group") 13. Ecosystem Profile 30-page summary (English) 14. PowerPoint presentation to CEPF Technical Working Group in Washington, D.C. 15. Summary of final briefing(s) to Senior Advisors (e.g., meeting proceedings, individual briefings, electronic and written contacts)	
5	30-Mar-17	Invoice for period of January-March 2017	<i>tbd</i>
	1-Apr-17	16. Revised Ecosystem Profile per comments at Working Group presentation, in English (i.e., "Draft 4, submitted for CEPF Donor Council review")	
	1-May-17	17. Final contact list of all individuals consulted for the Ecosystem Profile (i.e., name, position, organization, telephone, electronic mail, geographic location)	
	1-May-17	18. Summary of management implications (SOW 9.5)	
	15-May-17	19. Ecosystem Profile 16-page communication document (SOW 9.3)	
	1-Jun-17	20. GIS layer of KBA polygons with attributes 21. GIS layer of conservation corridors 22. Species-site matrix (in MS Excel) listing KBA trigger species and other features for each KBA	
	30-Jun-17	23. Final Ecosystem Profile (English) 24. Final Ecosystem Profile (Russian) 25. Final Ecosystem Profile 30-page summary (English) 26. Final Ecosystem Profile 30-page summary (Russian)	
6	30-Jun-17	Invoice for period of April-June 2017	\$15,000
Total			\$300,000

10. Provision of Facilities

CEPF will make available all relevant materials and documentation for completion of this work. These will include but are not limited to sample ecosystem profiles, sample agendas for stakeholder consultations, and lists of contacts.

11. Personnel

Writing the Ecosystem Profile and leading the process requires a team of experts with a broad set of skills. Based on past experience, CEPF requires the following.

A **Team Leader** who has multiple years of experience designing and managing multi-faceted conservation programs, particularly in Central Asia; demonstrated ability to lead teams of experts, facilitate stakeholder-driven processes, and coordinate with donors and government counterparts to develop an outcomes-based conservation strategy; and can write and synthesize a complex document similar to an ecosystem profile.

An expert in **Conservation Outcomes** who can lead or synthesize the process of identifying key biodiversity areas and conservation corridors, and as appropriate, understanding these in the context of other conservation, economic, and social development priorities in order to develop an outcomes-based strategy.

An expert in **Socio-Economics and Policy** who can lead or synthesize the analysis of the broad enabling environment in which conservation will take place, including demonstrated knowledge and experience of Central Asia's policies on protected areas, forestry, agriculture; local government and national government control over natural resources and decision-making; the role of civil society in natural resource management and the limiting factors on civil society in general; and the economic priorities within the Mountains of Central Asia.

If not captured in the above, **other experts** will provide skills in geographic information systems, protected area design and policy, terrestrial species within the Mountains of Central Asia, climate change, capacity building, and civil society engagement.

As noted above, the final Ecosystem Profile document should be prepared in professional quality English and the Summary should be prepared in English and Russian. As such, if the proposed personnel do not otherwise have these capabilities, applicants should include, by position title if not name, an appropriate allocation for a professional editor and/or translator.

12. Instructions for the Preparation of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted in English.

If a consortium of organizations is submitting a proposal, the proposal should reflect the inputs and capabilities of the entire consortium. Subsequent to evaluation and prior to grant award, CEPF may require some of the documents detailed below from each consortium member.

Applicants are advised to read this section carefully in conjunction with Section 15 (Evaluation Criteria) in order to understand the relative weighting CEPF will use in evaluating proposals.

Proposals should be submitted electronically to cepfgrants@conservation.org by the closing date listed on the first page of this solicitation. Files should be submitted in MS Word, MS Excel, PDF, or other standard format. The budget file requested below must be submitted in a functioning Excel spreadsheet.

12.1 Cover Letter

Applicants should include a cover letter to their proposals listing all documents submitted. The cover note should clearly list the name of the organizational chief executive, and, if different, the name(s) of all parties with the ability to legally bind the organization and the name(s) of all parties whom CEPF should contact for clarifications and negotiations. The cover note should also provide complete mailing address, street address (if different), electronic mail address(es), and telephone and fax numbers.

12.2 Organizational Capabilities (no page limit)

Provide documentation showing evidence of the ability to complete the tasks described in the scope of work. This should include, at a minimum:

1. Basic organizational information, including: year organization established, total permanent staff globally and in Central Asia, and organizational history and mission statement.
2. Relevant experience in the countries of the Mountains of Central Asia.
3. Experience managing multi-disciplinary efforts that are based on applied conservation science.
4. Experience managing stakeholder consultations.
5. Experience preparing programmatic design documents.
6. Experience conducting key biodiversity analyses or other appropriate science-based priority-setting exercises.
7. Experience 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.

12.3 Technical Approach (maximum 3 pages)

1. Applicants should demonstrate their understanding of the conservation outcomes and KBA analysis process as applied to the Mountains of Central Asia.
2. Applicants should also demonstrate their understanding of potential stakeholders in the hotspot; that is, both participants in the design process as well as the members of civil society that would make up the bulk of grant recipients during implementation.
3. Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge of work similar to, or that will serve as an input to, the Ecosystem Profile. There are multiple compendiums and analyses of conservation issues in the overall region and individual countries. The successful applicant will reflect on how it can build on this existing work.
4. Applicants should propose a tentative plan for the stakeholder consultation process, including, to the extent possible, locations of workshops and how these might be arranged geographically, thematically, or by types of participant (e.g., conservation science, civil society, local government, private sector).

12.4 Curricula Vitae of Key Personnel

This work effort will be taking place over a very tight time-frame and a primary basis of selection will be the expert personnel who are immediately available to begin work. Applicants must identify, by name,

the team leader and at least two or more additional experts who will lead this process. Applicants must provide curricula vitae for these individuals with the proposal. Proposals lacking curricula vitae may be considered non-responsive. Individual team members are expected to have, collectively, extensive experience in Central Asia and expertise in applied terrestrial conservation science, agricultural policy, civil society strengthening, local governance and decentralization, and the socio-economic and political conditions of the Mountains of Central Asia.

Collectively, the team must demonstrate fluency in spoken and written English and Russian.

12.5 Work Flow and Team Structure Diagrams

Provide as appropriate, work flow diagrams (e.g., Gantt charts), team structure diagrams, or any other visual element better explaining how technical activities will take place, when they will take place, and who will be responsible for leading them.

12.6 Consortium Description

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

12.7 Budget

Please refer to the attached budget template in Excel.

Concurrent with the release of this RfP, CEPF is providing each of the applicants with a budget template in Excel displaying thirteen primary line items: salaries/benefits, professional services, rent and storage, telecommunications, postage and delivery, supplies, furniture and equipment, maintenance, travel, meetings and special events, miscellaneous, sub-grants, and indirect costs. Each of these has various sub-items. Applicants must use this template, or provide an Excel file that summarizes to the line items and their sub-items. If a consortium of organizations is applying, each organization should have a parallel budget on a separate Worksheet, all of which feed into the lead applicant's Worksheet.

As noted above, the final Ecosystem Profile document should be prepared in professional quality English and Russian. As such, if the proposed personnel do not otherwise have these capabilities, applicants should include an appropriate budget for a professional editor and/or translator.

The Excel file provided must be functioning and not "locked" in any way. Worksheets should show all calculations, including unit costs, total units, and totals through the life of the activity.

CEPF allows for management support costs (also called "indirect costs" and which must reflect actual shared costs) up to a maximum of 13 percent of the direct costs. Management support costs must be justified with supporting documentation, such as audited financial statements. CEPF does not allow the application of a fee, profit, tax, or any other cost that could not otherwise be accounted for directly.

Provide a brief companion narrative if the budget is not otherwise clear. The companion narrative should explain any individual worksheet cells, budget elements, or assumptions that are not self-evident in the Excel file or otherwise explained in the proposal. (For example, an applicant's approach to

stakeholder consultations will make certain assumptions about the number of travelers whose costs are borne by this grant and the location and duration of consultations.)

This Excel file we have provided includes three Worksheets. Worksheet 1 is a summary that is based on Worksheet 2. The third Worksheet is a proposed deliverable schedule (i.e., a set of fixed obligations) for the life of the agreement.

13. Financial Questionnaire

Note to applicants: See attached 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.

14. Anti-Terrorism Screening

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

15. Evaluation Criteria

CEPF will make a best value determination of technical proposals in relation to proposed budgets. The least-cost budget will not necessarily be ranked the highest for evaluation purposes.

15.1 Technical Evaluation

CEPF will use the scorecard below for the technical evaluation of proposals. The scorecard shows the questions that reviewers will use and the relative weighting of each category. Applicants should ensure that each of these points is adequately addressed in either their Proposal Files (discussed in Section 12) or Financial Questionnaire (discussed in Section 13.)

Mountains of Central Asia Ecosystem Profile Proposal Technical Proposal Scorecard

1	Organizational Experience	Points: 30
1.1	Do the applicant and its partners have relevant experience in terrestrial conservation science?	
1.2	Do the applicant and its partners have relevant experience in analyzing civil society, policy, and socioeconomic conditions in terms of designing a conservation program?	
1.3	Do the applicant and its partners have relevant experience in the Mountains of Central Asia or the region?	
1.4	Does the lead organization demonstrate experience managing programs of similar size, scale, and complexity as that of the Ecosystem Profile Team?	
2	Personnel	Points: 50
2.1	Does the applicant propose a clear and viable personnel plan, including names, resumes, position titles, job descriptions, level of effort, work location, and reporting lines of authority?	
2.2	Does the applicant submit the name and resume a single, dedicated team leader, and does this person have the appropriate technical skills/experience and appropriate managerial skills/experience?	
2.3	Does the applicant propose, by name and resume, personnel other than the team leader, and do these people have appropriate technical skills/experience and appropriate managerial skills/experience?	
2.4	Do the proposed team members have, individually or collectively, the language skills necessary to operate effectively in the hotspot?	
2.5	Does the applicant propose a plan for recruitment and/or mobilization of “to be determined” personnel, including job descriptions, job qualifications, and curricula vitae of personnel from the applicant’s organization who will perform relevant duties while recruitment is pending?	
3	Proposed Technical Approach	Points: 20
3.1	Does the applicant demonstrate a clear understanding of the KBA methodology and conservation outcomes as these relate to the Ecosystem Profile for the Mountains of Central Asia?	
3.2	Does the applicant demonstrate a clear understanding of civil society in the Mountains of Central Asia and the role it will play in both the production of the Ecosystem Profile and the eventual recipient of CEPF grants?	
3.3	Does the applicant demonstrate a knowledge of existing work similar to the Ecosystem Profile, or relevant inputs, and suggest a way to efficiently build upon this?	
3.4	Does the applicant propose a clear plan for engagement of stakeholders at multiple levels, in multiple locations, and across multiple disciplines to both produce the Ecosystem Profile document and ensure a collaborative process that serves as the foundation for a future grants program?	

15.2 Cost Evaluation

CEPF will consider each cost proposal in relation to the level of quality and output suggested in the technical proposal. Cost proposals will thus be considered in terms of their realism and the items below, but will not be given a numeric score. CEPF will select the applicant which presents the best value for the required product and services.

Mountains of Central Asia Ecosystem Profile Proposal Cost Proposal Scorecard

4	Budget	Points: cost realism and best value; no direct weighting
4.1	Is the budget within the limit named in Item 6?	
4.2	Are all costs mathematically justified through the clear presentation of unit costs, total units, and total costs?	
4.3	Are all unit costs, total units, and total costs appropriate in relation to the proposed technical and managerial activities?	
4.4	Are proposed unit rates in accord with market rates in the region?	
4.5	If the applicant claims indirect costs, does it clearly show the base of application and is this distinct from any previously enumerated direct costs; does the applicant provide an explanation of how the indirect cost rate has been determined (e.g., historical averages, audited financial statements, precedent contracts); and does the applicant provide supporting documentation with its financial questionnaire?	
4.6	Does the budget relate clearly and directly to the proposal?	
4.7	Are the costs budgeted for stakeholder consultations sufficient and realistic?	
4.8	Are all macroeconomic assumptions affecting the budget reasonable and justified, such as foreign exchange rates and inflation?	

Annex 1. Criteria for KBA Prioritization for CEPF Investment

1. **Biological priority.** The KBA is ranked as a high relative priority for biological importance, based on the criteria of irreplaceable and vulnerability set out in Langhammer et al., *Identification and Gap Analysis of Key Biodiversity Areas* (2007).
2. **Degree of threat.** Threats pose a risk, in the short-to-medium-term, to the existence of habitats and ecosystem services vital to priority species and local people.
3. **Funding need.** Given the existing level of conservation investment by national and international donors, an important funding need exists for CEPF investment to address.
4. **Management need.** Given the existing management plans, staffing and infrastructure, and mechanisms for community engagement, an important management need exists for CEPF investment to address.
5. **Civil society capacity.** Civil society groups working in or near the KBA have the potential to act as effective local stewards and champions of the KBA and its trigger species.
6. **Operational feasibility.** Operational obstacles (e.g., insecurity, drug cultivation, legal prohibitions) do not preclude effective CEPF engagement.
7. **Alignment with national priorities.** The KBA is recognized as a biodiversity priority in relevant national strategies.
8. **Opportunity for landscape-scale conservation.** The KBA provides opportunities to achieve landscape-scale conservation through linkage to large KBAs or KBA clusters

Attachments

1. CEPF Global Monitoring Framework:
<http://www.cepf.net/SiteCollectionDocuments/MCA/CEPF-GlobalMonitoringFramework2012.xlsx>
2. Budget template:
<http://www.cepf.net/SiteCollectionDocuments/MCA/BudgetTemplate.xlsx>
3. Financial Questionnaire form:
<http://www.cepf.net/SiteCollectionDocuments/MCA/CEPF-Financial-Questionnaire.docx>
4. Anti-Terrorist screening form:
<http://www.cepf.net/SiteCollectionDocuments/MCA/AntiTerrorist-Screening-Worksheet.doc>
5. Map of the Mountains of Central Asia biodiversity hotspot:
http://www.cepf.net/where_we_work/regions/europe_central_asia/Mountains-of-Central-Asia/Pages/default.aspx

END OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS