

## **Call for Letters of Inquiry East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot**

### **Large Grants**

<b>Eligible Countries:</b>	Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu
<b>Opening Date:</b>	Friday, 4 December 2020
<b>Closing Date:</b>	Friday, 15 January 2021 (08:00; GMT) Friday, 15 January 2021 (18:00; Port Moresby) Friday, 15 January 2021 (19:00; Honiara) Friday, 15 January 2021 (19:00; Port Vila)
<b>Grant Size:</b>	US\$20,000 to US\$200,000

CEPF and IUCN Oceania, as the regional implementation team (RIT) for the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot, are accepting letters of inquiry (LOIs) from non-government organizations, community groups, indigenous people's organizations, women's groups, private companies and other civil society organizations in relation to the eligible activities and geographies described below.

### **BACKGROUND**

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

The East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot covers the terrestrial portions of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and the northern and western island region of Papua New Guinea. CEPF's niche for investment in the region was formulated through a participatory process that engaged civil society, donors and government stakeholders throughout the region. The resulting investment strategy (2013-2021) is documented within the ecosystem profile, available in [English](#) (PDF – 3.8 MB). This investment strategy is comprised of a series of strategic directions, broken down into investment priorities outlining the types of activities that are eligible for CEPF funding.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the CEPF website, particularly the sections on [Eligibility](#), [Before You Apply](#) and [How to Apply](#). Potential applicants who are uncertain of the eligibility of their organization or project concept are encouraged to contact the people listed below for clarification.

## **ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

The scope of this call is limited to the **two** types of activities and locations described below. Applicants **must address one of these**.

### **Assessment of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)**

**Strategic Direction 1:** Empower local community to protect and manage globally significant biodiversity at priority KBAs.

The 2012 ecosystem profile identified 95 KBAs (Table 13 and text on pages 31-37, Appendix 2, pages 220-223) across the three countries. Of these, the profile prioritized 20 KBAs (Table 33, page 164) for investment. The ecosystem profile identified KBAs using an IUCN methodology from 2007<sup>1</sup> which, at the time, represented “state of the science” with standards for determining what qualified as a KBA, the documentation required, and determination of boundaries. However, the KBA methodology was updated in 2016<sup>2</sup>, suggesting the need for a re-evaluation of the work in 2012. An overview and relevant documentation of KBAs can be found at [www.keybiodiversityareas.org](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org).

CEPF seeks interested and eligible parties to systematically update the analysis of KBAs in this region. This could include:

- Reassessing all or a subset of the 95 KBAs from 2012 using the new 2016 KBA standard.
- Submitting any of the 95 KBAs via the process endorsed by the KBA Partnership.
- Identifying new KBAs per the 2016 standard.

LOIs should be clear on the scope the applicant wishes to undertake (e.g., certain islands, certain countries, certain taxa).

LOIs should also presume that global travel restrictions due to COVID-19 will continue through much or all of the project period and propose activities, accordingly, including having teams of researchers working in separate countries.

Highly qualified applicants will demonstrate their past experience applying the KBA methodology to site identification or experience applying similar methodologies.

Better LOIs will move beyond the mere process of determining and documenting

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<sup>1</sup> Identification and Gap Analysis of Key Biodiversity Areas: Targets for Comprehensive Protected Area Systems. Langhammer, et al. 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas. IUCN. 2016.

KBAs, considering ways to promote the institutionalization of this methodology within the host countries, by relevant civil society and by donors.

### **Impact Assessment and Network Promotion**

**Strategic Direction 4:** Increase local, national and regional capacity to conserve biodiversity through catalyzing civil society partnerships.

Since 2013, the CEPF Secretariat and the RIT (IUCN) have awarded 107 grants to 63 unique organizations in the three hotspot countries, plus ones in Australia, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Throughout the life of the program, CEPF and the RIT have monitored the biophysical and socio-economic impact of grants per the logical framework in the ecosystem profile (Page 191-195) and per CEPF's global monitoring protocols, described in the Impact section of CEPF's [website](#).

As investments in this hotspot come to a close in 2021, CEPF seeks interested and eligible parties to summarize results and lessons, facilitate connections among stakeholders within and/or across countries, build capacity, and better articulate, with CEPF and the RIT, a shared vision for the future. This could include:

- Offsite reviews of grantee reports and *post facto* engagement with grantees to assess and summarize results and impacts during the grant period and the subsequent sustainability of these.
- Contextualization of results within broader themes of national policy, regional initiatives, external threats such as natural resource extraction and donor interests.
- Facilitation of national, multi-national, or thematic workshops with recipients of closed and ongoing grants and other relevant stakeholders to identify future directions for a grant program similar to CEPF.
- Assessing and sharing lessons learned to improve conservation actions.
- Facilitation of sessions with specific capacity building aims.
- Reinforcement of existing networks of organizations sharing any of the aims of CEPF and the ecosystem profile.

LOIs should be clear on the scope the applicant wishes to undertake (i.e., all or only a subset of any of the above bullets).

LOIs should also presume that global travel restrictions due to COVID-19 will continue through much or all of the project period and propose activities, accordingly, including imagining workshops and events being held via video conference or electronic means.

Highly qualified applicants will demonstrate their past experience implementing such work.

Better LOIs will demonstrate a vision for how such work can be sustained, whether within a country or across a hotspot.

## ELIGIBLE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

This work is expected to cover the entire East Melanesian Islands Hotspot, unless the applicant specifies a subset of the region. The actual work can take place inside or outside of the region.

## BUDGET

LOIs must have a budget between US\$20,000 and US\$200,000 to be eligible for consideration.

## TIMEFRAME

Projects are expected to start approximately three to six months from the release of this call for LOIs. Work on KBAs must be completed no later than 30 June 2022. Work on impact assessment and network promotion must be completed by 31 December 2021.

## GENERAL GUIDANCE

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

Where relevant, applicants are encouraged to submit LOIs that **harmonize with existing national or regional initiatives**. Synergies with other organizations are also eligible, with one lead organization submitting the application alongside sub-grantee project partners.

Applicants based outside of eligible countries may submit an LOI as long as the project deliverables are focused on the conservation need within an eligible country/countries.

**International organizations are encouraged to involve local organizations or communities as project partners**, or explain how local stakeholders will be engaged as part of project implementation.

Applicants are advised to read the **investment strategy chapter of the ecosystem profile** (Chapter 12) to ensure full understanding of the strategic directions and investment priorities.

## HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must respond to the call via the [ConservationGrants](#) electronic portal. CEPF will not accept letters of inquiry via email or any other mechanism.

If you have not previously used ConservationGrants, you will need to [register for a new account](#). If you encounter any technical difficulties with ConservationGrants, please email [conservationgrants@conservation.org](mailto:conservationgrants@conservation.org).

## **SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS**

ConservationGrants will automatically confirm receipt of all LOIs that are properly submitted within the system by the closing date.

The LOI review process will take approximately four weeks from the closing date. All applicants will receive a response from CEPF following review of their submissions. The review committee will select the strongest LOIs that meet the eligibility criteria.

Applicants whose LOIs receive a positive review will be invited to submit a full proposal, again through ConservationGrants. Full proposals that receive a positive review will lead to the award of a grant between Conservation International, as the host of the CEPF Secretariat, and the applicant's organization (the "grantee"). Grants will be denominated in United States dollars and grant agreements will be in English.

## **REFERENCE MATERIALS**

All applicants are advised to review the CEPF Investment Strategy for the East Melanesian Islands within the ecosystem profile (Chapter 12). This provides more detail on the types of activities CEPF will fund under each investment priority:

- [Ecosystem Profile – English](#) (PDF – 3.9 MB)

CEPF is committed to integrating gender into its portfolio. Applicants should design projects and write proposals that consider gender issues in the achievement of their conservation impacts.

CEPF has developed several resources that can help applicants to design, implement and evaluate gender-aware projects ([CEPF Gender Toolkit](#), PDF – 359 KB) and understand what CEPF seeks in a proposal ([CEPF Gender Fact Sheet](#), PDF – 352 KB). Visit the [CEPF and Gender webpage](#) to learn more about how CEPF addresses gender in the projects it supports.

The integration of gender in your project will be a factor in evaluation.

Additional resources:

- [Before You Apply](#)
- [12 Tips for Getting Your Grant Idea Funded](#)
- [CEPF Project Database](#)
- [Life Cycle of a Grant](#)
- [ConservationGrants Frequently Asked Questions](#)

## CONTACT

Before applying, applicants are encouraged to discuss project ideas and eligibility with the program officer for your region:

- Helen Pippard, RIT Team Leader: [helen.pippard@iucn.org](mailto:helen.pippard@iucn.org)
- RIT information: [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org)

Technical questions regarding the ConservationGrants online system should be emailed to [conservationgrants@conservation.org](mailto:conservationgrants@conservation.org).

For general queries about the CEPF East Melanesian Islands program, please contact Regional Implementation Team Leader Helen Pippard or visit the [RIT website](#).

## NOTE ON CLOSING DATE AND TIME

ConservationGrants is an online database that uses a strict electronic system for closing the period in which it will accept submissions. The ConservationGrants portal will become electronically closed to all submissions at the following time:

California, USA	15 January 2021	00:00:00
Washington, D.C., USA	15 January 2021	03:00:00
GMT	15 January 2021	08:00:00
Port Moresby, PNG	15 January 2021	18:00:00 (6 p.m. local time)
Honiara Solomon Islands	15 January 2021	19:00:00 (7 p.m. local time)
Port Vila, Vanuatu	15 January 2021	19:00:00 (7 p.m. local time)