



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

### **Large and Small Grants**

**Eligible Countries:** Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, the islands region of Papua New Guinea

**Opening Date:** 15 October 2019

**Closing Date:** 22 November 2019, 6 p.m., in Washington, D.C. (Eastern Time)

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)—in its role as the CEPF regional implementation team (RIT) for the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot—are accepting letters of inquiry (LOI) from civil society organizations for large- and small-grant projects.

### **BACKGROUND**

CEPF is designed to safeguard Earth's biologically richest yet threatened terrestrial regions, known as biodiversity hotspots. 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 plays a critical role in achieving biodiversity conservation outcomes.

CEPF's niche for investment in the East Melanesian Islands (EMI) was formulated through a participatory process that engaged civil society, donor and governmental stakeholders throughout the region. The results of this process and the eight-year (2013–2021) strategy that CEPF has identified for supporting biodiversity conservation in the region are outlined in the ecosystem profile. Five strategic directions were identified, covering 20 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in the three countries that are eligible for CEPF support, and addressing threats to 48 priority species. The CEPF investment strategy supports biodiversity conservation in ways that deliver significant, meaningful benefits to local communities while making a sustained contribution to the development of local, national and regional capacity for conservation.

In December 2018, CEPF held the mid-term review of the EMI investment in Honiara, Solomon Islands. The recommendations from that meeting have been summarized into the priorities for this call for proposals.

In the remaining years of CEPF's investment in EMI, we are looking for consolidation of results, creating institutional and financial sustainability, leveraging resources, and continuing to work on community-driven and locally owned conservation actions and management plans that will address threats and safeguard biodiversity via the engagement of civil society.

It is essential that applicants familiarize themselves with the investment strategy for the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot, which is contained within the [ecosystem profile](#) (PDF – 3.8 MB).

Applicants are advised to carefully review other references available on the CEPF and IUCN Oceania websites when preparing their LOIs, specifically:

- [How to apply](#)
- [Tips for getting your grant funded](#)
- [CEPF projects database](#)
- [CEPF safeguard policies](#)

Please note that preference will be given to projects that are the closest fit to the investment strategy and demonstrate a leading role for local civil society organizations. CEPF and IUCN particularly welcome applications from local and grassroots organizations (for example, community groups, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions and private companies). Individuals are encouraged to work with civil society organizations to develop applications rather than to apply directly. Anyone who is uncertain of their eligibility to apply for CEPF funding should contact the RIT at [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org).

## SCOPE OF THE CALL

**This call covers the EMI hotspot of Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the islands region of Papua New Guinea.**

Applicants are invited to submit LOIs for projects that will contribute to CEPF's strategy for East Melanesia, building on current and past CEPF investments in the region, and focusing on the strategic directions and investment priorities outlined below. All proposals should demonstrate direct and concrete conservation results that contribute to the priorities outlined in this call.

**Strategic Direction 1. Empower local communities to protect and manage globally significant biodiversity at priority Key Biodiversity Areas underserved by current conservation efforts.**

Applicants are reminded to familiarize themselves with the priority Key Biodiversity Areas for investment, which are presented on pages 164 and 165 of the [EMI Ecosystem Profile](#) (3.8 MB).

CEPF and the RIT will continue to prioritise the awarding of grants in the priority KBAs, and to build on previous work in order to move towards designation or management of community-conserved areas/protected areas. CEPF is able to consider a letter of inquiry in non-priority KBAs as long as it fulfills the investment priorities found under Strategic Directions 2,3 or 4.

**1.2 Raise awareness about the values of biodiversity and the nature of threats and drivers among local communities at priority sites.**

Proposals are welcomed that consider supporting public awareness-raising on biodiversity – for example through exhibitions, outreach through popular media channels such as film and magazines.

**1.3 Support local communities to design and implement locally relevant conservation actions that respond to major threats at priority sites.**

Proposals should demonstrate dialogue; stakeholder consultations; community engagement and priorities; technical assistance assessments; and clear and simple management planning.

**Proposals are particularly encouraged to:**

- i. Build on previous planning and baseline work carried out in CEPF's priority sites under Investment Priorities 1.1, 1.2 and 2.1.
- ii. Focus on previously under-represented sites such as Ghizo, Nende and Vanikoro in Solomon Islands; Baining Mountains in PNG; Aneityum, Futuna, and Green Hill, Tanna in Vanuatu.
- iii. Focus on strategic efforts to combat illegal logging and adverse effects on biodiversity from extractive industries in priority areas.
- iv. Develop and implement management plans for priority KBAs, and establish community-led and relevant monitoring protocols for implementation of such plans.
- v. Incorporate KBA-level data into national policies and targets.

**1.4 Demonstrate conservation incentives (eco-tourism, payments for ecosystem services, conservation agreements, etc.) at priority sites.**

Proposals must demonstrate a clear link between livelihood benefits and conservation goals. Proposals should take into consideration the sustainability and possible replication of successful approaches through, for example, sustainable financing mechanisms.

**Proposals are particularly encouraged that:**

- i. Assess or implement the feasibility of alternative livelihood options in priority sites across the hotspot, for example, crops that provide financial incentives for conservation or investment in women-led initiatives.
- ii. Focus on small-scale businesses within priority KBAs that directly support financial sustainability of conservation activities such as those within a site-based management plan.

**Strategic Direction 2. Integrate biodiversity conservation into local land-use and development planning.**

**2.1 Conduct participatory ownership and tenure mapping of resources within customary lands at priority sites.**

Proposals should aim to clarify ownership and tenure arrangements over natural resources within customary lands at priority sites so that community-based conservation efforts can stand up to incompatible development and land-use decisions, such as expansion of commercial logging, plantations or mining.

Proposals are encouraged to:

- i. Show a clear link and need for future site-based conservation activities in the priority KBAs, such as registering of community conservation areas/protected areas.

**2.2 Provide legal training and support to communities for effective enforcement of environmental protection regulations.**

Proposals should ensure that communities understand due process in environmental licensing for development projects and have access to legal redress if it is not followed. CEPF wishes to ensure such training will yield a corresponding impact, such as negotiations with a logging company to prevent encroachment into the KBAs.

Proposals are particularly encouraged to:

- i. Aim to support the provision of training and outreach to communities affected by logging, mining, commercial agriculture and other development projects incompatible with the goal of biodiversity conservation, especially within CEPF's priority sites.
- ii. Focus on threatened areas in Solomon Islands and the islands of PNG, especially within CEPF's

priority sites.

### **2.3 Explore partnerships with private companies to promote sustainable development through better environmental and social practices in key natural resources sectors.**

Proposals should support civil society organizations to explore and develop partnerships with private companies operating in the key natural resources sectors of forestry, agriculture and mining to develop and pilot better environmental and social management practices.

Proposals are particularly encouraged that focus on:

- i. Tourism developments or agricultural expansion in Vanuatu.
- ii. Developing links with forestry companies, especially in Solomon Islands and the islands of PNG.
- iii. The development of small businesses to integrate environmental management practices, such as agroforestry with biodiversity conservation.

### **Strategic Direction 3. Safeguard priority globally threatened species by addressing major threats and information gaps.**

Applicants are reminded to familiarize themselves with the 48 priority species for investment, which are outlined on page 170 of the [EMI ecosystem profile](#) (3.8 MB).

CEPF and the RIT will consider the need for collecting further data for the priority species, as long as the result of such an effort is to develop a locally owned species recovery and management plan.

### **3.2 Develop, implement and monitor species recovery plans for species most at risk, where their status and distribution are known.**

Proposals should aim to implement and monitor conservation actions, and to develop recovery plans for priority species if they do not already exist, and if there is a clear commitment to turn planning into action by local stakeholders.

Proposals are particularly encouraged to:

- i. Build on previously funded work by CEPF.
- ii. Focus on the development, implementation and monitoring of community-driven and relevant species recovery plans, which may incorporate relevant rehabilitation work or identification of safe havens and habitats that aims to contribute to the survival and management of priority species.
- iii. Focus on priority species for which no work has been carried out yet or which require further work (see Annex 1 of this document).
- iv. Incorporate species data into national policies and conservation priorities.

### **3.3 Introduce science-based harvest management of priority species important to local food security.**

Proposals should aim to establish sustainable yields for priority species *where appropriate to do so*, develop science-based harvesting plans, and integrate such sustainable harvesting approaches into community-based species management plans. Research into sustainable yields and harvesting practices will only be eligible for support as part of projects that lead to the development *and introduction* of science-based harvesting plans.

Proposals are particularly encouraged to:

- i. Build on previously funded work by CEPF.
- ii. Incorporate elements of alternative cash income projects to reduce exploitation and pressure on priority species.

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

Priority will be given to those local and regional organizations that play a strategic role in achieving CEPF conservation outcomes, especially related to priority sites and priority species.

CEPF and the RIT will continue to focus on capacity building for domestic CSOs, with an emphasis on promoting financial and institutional sustainability of recipients of CEPF funding, rather than the setting up of new organizations.

**4.1 Strengthen the capacity of local and national civil society organizations in financial management, project management and organizational governance.**

Proposals should aim to provide capacity building to local and national organizations, which may include training and mentoring in financial management, project management or development of appropriate governance arrangements.

Proposals should seek to develop and implement financial sustainability plans to diversify their funding sources to reduce dependence on CEPF and other short-term grants.

Proposals are particularly encouraged to:

- i. Establish a network of CSO and conservation practitioners, at national, sub-national or regional levels, in order to facilitate information exchange and collaborative conservation initiatives
- ii. Strengthen the financial and administrative capacity of CSOs through training and mentoring and by sharing expertise with other relevant CSOs, especially those working in CEPF's priority KBA sites.
- iii. Strengthen and maintain the capacity of rangers and linkages within and between ranger networks.

**4.3 Strengthen civil society capacity in conservation management, science and leadership through short-term training courses at domestic institutions.**

Proposals should involve short-term courses that focus on topics such as conservation management, conservation science and/or leadership and project management training, and should demonstrate a clear commitment to institutional and financial sustainability.

Proposals are particularly encouraged that:

- i. Show a clear objective and link to conservation outcomes in EMI, especially in the priority sites or relating to priority species.
- ii. Explore financial sustainability of the course, to enable continuation post-CEPF investment.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Non-governmental organizations, community groups, private enterprises, universities and other civil society applicants may apply for funding. Organizations must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions. Applications from organizations that propose to build capacity of local civil society and community groups are particularly encouraged. Projects must be located within the sites and countries identified in the ecosystem profile.

Government owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can demonstrate that the enterprise or institution can fulfil the following criteria:

- i. is a legal personality independent of any government agency or actor;
- ii. the authority to apply for and receive private funds; and
- iii. may not assert a claim of sovereign immunity.

Anyone who is uncertain of their eligibility or likelihood of receiving funding from CEPF should contact the RIT at [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org) for clarification.

Grants cannot be used for the following activities: (i) purchase of land; (ii) removal or alteration of any physical cultural property (including those with archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious or unique natural values); (iii) relocation of people or any other form of involuntary resettlement; or (iv) capitalization of trust funds. All activities must comply with CEPF's [social and environmental safeguard policies](#).

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The CEPF Secretariat, the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) and the national Technical Advisory Groups in each country will be looking for the following criteria when reviewing a CEPF letter of inquiry. CEPF strongly encourages applicants to ensure their LOI is prepared to meet these criteria:

1. Strategic importance to CEPF: Will the results of this project contribute to achieving the conservation priorities articulated in the CEPF East Melanesian Islands Ecosystem Profile? How will the project contribute to a specific investment priority and target within the ecosystem profile and logical framework? How will the proposed work meet specific and justified needs in the KBA, country or hotspot?
2. Ability of project to achieve conservation results: Are the objectives, approach/strategies and deliverables well-thought-out and comprehensive? Are the project objectives, approach/ strategies and proposed deliverables aligned to achieving strategic conservation results?
3. Applicant capabilities: Does the applicant have the capacity and comparative advantage (i.e., skills, knowledge, experience, relationships and credibility with local stakeholders) to successfully implement the project? Is permission required for the project to proceed? If yes, are there any risks in the project obtaining permission?
4. Building EMI civil society capacity: Does the project contribute to CEPF's priority to empower East Melanesian civil society organizations, including local community organizations and indigenous groups?
5. Participation: Does the project incorporate stakeholder consultation in design and participation in implementation to build local ownership, buy-in and capacity? Were key stakeholders, including government agencies and local communities, involved in the project design and will they be involved in project implementation?
6. Cost-effectiveness: Is the proposed funding request commensurate and reasonable in view of the objectives and activities proposed? Is the proposed funding request acceptable within CEPF's overall budget allocation for the strategic direction?

7. Strategic alliances and partnerships: Does the project have the potential to establish and/or maintain long-term relationships for collaboration on biodiversity conservation with appropriate local, regional or national organizations? Does it ensure coordination and build synergy with existing and future initiatives, especially with other projects funded by CEPF?
8. Leveraging resources: Does the project attract additional funding or an in-kind contribution that will directly increase CEPF's impact and contribute to project sustainability? Is the applicant already receiving funding for this project?
9. Ongoing projects: does the project complement and generate synergies with projects already being implemented?

## CEPF GRANT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

CEPF strongly encourages applicants to become familiar with project management policies of CEPF grant agreements prior to submitting the LOI to ensure sufficient staffing and budgetary resources are programmed in the proposal. CEPF views policy compliance as a high priority and will provide additional training during project launch. If your proposal is selected to proceed further in the application process, CEPF will provide additional information on policy requirements and provide guidance to ensure project design and budget include sufficient attention to policy compliance.

**For large grants**, we strongly encourage applicants to consult CEPF's website, specifically [Life Cycle of a Grant](#), to obtain more information on CEPF's grant management policies, including the grant agreement, orientation training, safeguard policies and monitoring tools.

**For small grants**, consult with the IUCN RIT for more information at [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org).

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](#)) and understand what CEPF seeks in a proposal ([CEPF Gender Fact Sheet](#)). Visit the [CEPF and Gender webpage](#) to learn more about how CEPF addresses gender in the projects it supports.

## HOW TO APPLY

CEPF supports biodiversity conservation through two types of grants: large grants of more than US\$20,000 and small grants of US\$20,000 or less. This open call is for both large and small grants.

All applicants must submit an LOI in English. For small grants, the LOI template is available on the [IUCN website](#). For large grants, applicants must submit LOIs online through ConservationGrants (details below).

Before submitting formal LOIs, applicants are encouraged to discuss proposal ideas and eligibility with the regional implementation team (RIT) at [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org).

**\*The deadline for receipt of LOIs for small and large grants is: 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time in Washington, D.C., on Friday, 22 November 2019.\***

### **Process for applying for a small grant (US\$20,000 or less):**

1. Read through all the sections of this call for proposals document carefully, and contact the RIT at [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org) to:

- a. Confirm your eligibility to apply;
- b. Ensure your proposal idea fits with CEPF's strategy for the East Melanesian Islands and with the specific priorities for this call for proposals; and
- c. Get further information or clarity on CEPF's policies and procedures or the application process.

IUCN, as the RIT, awards and manages CEPF small grants.

2. Download the CEPF East Melanesian Islands [small grant LOI form](#) in English. If you are having difficulties accessing the form, please contact the RIT at [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org).

3. Once the LOI is completed, send an email to [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org) with the LOI attached, on or before the deadline of **Friday 22nd November 2019**. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application. Please note that hardcopy LOIs are not acceptable.

4. A decision on the LOI will be made by the RIT with input from our independent Technical Advisory Group in each country as well as other external technical reviewers, if needed. IUCN will aim to send a communication by no later than 15 December 2019, to let you know if your LOI has been successful.

5. If the LOI has been successful, you will be asked to complete a Financial Risk Assessment form and an Anti-Terrorist and World Bank Screening form before signing a contract with IUCN for a small grant.

6. Please note that all grants must have an end date no later than 30 April 2021.

### **Process for applying for a large grant (more than US\$20,000):**

1. Read through all the sections of this call for proposals document carefully, and contact the RIT at [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org) to:

- a. Confirm your eligibility to apply;
- b. Ensure your proposal idea fits with CEPF's strategy for the East Melanesian Islands and with the specific priorities for this call for proposals; and
- c. Get further information or clarity on CEPF's policies and procedures or the application process.

The CEPF Secretariat awards and manages large grants with support from the RIT.

2. Applicants must submit a letter of inquiry through the ConservationGrants electronic portal [here](#). CEPF will not accept letters of inquiry via electronic mail or any other mechanism.

Applicants who do not have a ConservationGrants account will be required to [register a new account](#). Questions regarding account creation or the application process should be emailed to [conservationgrants@conservation.org](mailto:conservationgrants@conservation.org).

3. Please complete the LOI in ConservationGrants no later than the deadline of 6:00 p.m., Eastern



Time in Washington, D.C., on **Friday, 22 November 2019**. You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your application. Please note that hardcopy LOIs will not be accepted.

4. A decision on the LOI is based on reviews by the CEPF Secretariat, the RIT, our independent technical advisory group in each country and other external technical reviewers when necessary. The CEPF Secretariat will aim to send a communication by no later than 20 December 2019, to let you know the recommendations of the CEPF evaluation process regarding your proposal.

5. If your LOI has been successful, the CEPF Secretariat will invite you to prepare a full project proposal in the ConservationGrants electronic portal. The detailed guidelines for preparing a full project proposal and contracting timeline will be provided with the letter of invitation.

6. Please note that all grants must have an end date no later than 30 April 2021.

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 recipient (the "grantee"). Grants will be denominated in United States dollars and grant agreements will be in English.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT**

For general questions about this call for proposals, please contact the CEPF East Melanesian Islands Regional Implementation Team based at IUCN Oceania.

Based on experience from previous calls for proposals, discussing your proposal ideas with us before submitting an LOI will significantly increase the chances of success. **Please contact us before 13 November 2019, to discuss your ideas.**

Email: [cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org](mailto:cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org)

Website: [www.iucn.org/regions/oceania](http://www.iucn.org/regions/oceania)

5, Ma'afu Street, Suva, Fiji

Tel: +679 331 9084; Fax: +679 310 0128

For specific questions related to this call, you may also contact:

Helen Pippard, Regional Implementation Team project manager: [helen.pippard@iucn.org](mailto:helen.pippard@iucn.org)

Zola Sangga, country coordinator for **Papua New Guinea**: [zola.sangga@ext.iucn.org](mailto:zola.sangga@ext.iucn.org)

Vatumaraga Molisa, country coordinator for **Vanuatu**: [vatumaraga.molisa@ext.iucn.org](mailto:vatumaraga.molisa@ext.iucn.org)

Ravin Dhari, country coordinator for **Solomon Islands**: [ravin.dhari@ext.iucn.org](mailto:ravin.dhari@ext.iucn.org)

## ANNEX 1:

### Priority species not yet supported by CEPF to date

	Scientific Name	English Name	Location	IUCN Red List Status	Conservation Need
Bird	<i>Aplonis santovestris</i>	Santo mountain starling	Santo	VU	Control of invasive species
Bird	<i>Charmosyna palmarum</i>	Palm lorikeet	Solomon Islands (Nendo, Vanikoro), Vanuatu (Torba)	VU	Control of invasive species
Bird	<i>Ducula bakeri</i>	Vanuatu imperial pigeon	Vanuatu	VU	Control of invasive species
Bird	<i>Erythrura regia</i>	Royal parrotfinch	Vanuatu	VU	Control of overexploitation
Bird	<i>Pterodroma brevipes</i>	Collared petrel	Vanuatu, possibly Solomon Islands	VU	Control of invasive species
Bird	<i>Pterodroma cervicalis</i>	White-necked Petrel	Vanuatu, possibly Solomon Islands	VU	Control of invasive species
Mammal	<i>Pteropus anetianus</i>	Vanuatu flying-fox	Vanuatu	VU	Control of overexploitation
Mammal	<i>Solomys ponceleti</i>	Poncelet's giant rat	Bougainville and Choiseul	CR	Control of overexploitation
Mammal	<i>Solomys sapientis</i>	Isabel giant rat	Isabel	EN	Control of overexploitation
Mammal	<i>Tadarida bregullae</i>	Fijian mastiff bat	Santo	EN	Control of overexploitation
Plant	<i>Agathis silbae</i>		Santo	VU	Control of overexploitation
Plant	<i>Calophyllum waliense</i>		Manus	EN	Control of overexploitation
Plant	<i>Carpoxylon macrospermum</i>		Tafea province	CR	Population management
Plant	<i>Cyphosperma voutmelense</i>	Voutméleé palm	Santo	EN	Population management
Plant	<i>Diospyros insularis</i>	New Guinea ebony	Bougainville, Solomon Islands	EN	Control of overexploitation
Plant	<i>Drymophloeus hentyi</i>		East New Britain	EN	Population management
Plant	<i>Helicia polyosmoides</i>		Manus	CR	Population management
Plant	<i>Intsia bijuga</i>	Moluccan ironwood	PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu	VU	Control of overexploitation
Plant	<i>Ptychosperma gracile</i>		PNG	EN	Population management
Plant	<i>Veitchia montgomeryana</i>		Efate	EN	Population management
Reptile	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Loggerhead turtle	PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu	EN	Control of overexploitation
Reptile	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Green turtle	Solomon Islands	EN	Control of overexploitation
Reptile	<i>Emoia aneityumensis</i>	Anatom skink	Tafea province	EN	Control of overexploitation