

Call for Proposals

Evaluation of Lessons Learned in Relation to the Regional Implementation Team for the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

Opening Date:	16 August 2021
Closing Date:	10 September 2021, 24:00 hrs (U.S. EST)
Questions Due Date:	1 September 2021 (Questions should be sent to cepf@cepf.net .)
Submission:	Proposals should be sent to cepf@cepf.net by the closing date.
Location:	CEPF, 2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22202, USA

1. INVITATION

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International (CI), the European Union, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Japan and the World Bank. CEPF is a global program that provides grants to civil society to safeguard the world's biodiversity hotspots. As one of the founding partners, CI administers the global program through a CEPF Secretariat. CEPF's purpose is to strengthen the involvement and effectiveness of civil society in the conservation and management of globally important biodiversity.

The CEPF Secretariat intends to conduct an evaluation of the regional implementation team (RIT) of the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot to inform future involvement in the region. The RIT provides strategic leadership for the program, which is implemented in three countries: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Interested consultants or firms should submit a proposal by the closing date listed above. The successful consultant shall be required to adhere to CI's code of ethics, statement of work, and the terms and conditions of the contract. This call for proposals does not obligate CI to execute a contract nor does it commit CI to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of the proposals. Furthermore, CI reserves the right to reject any and all offers if such action is considered to be in the best interest of CI.

2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

In each of the biodiversity hotspots where it invests, CEPF selects a RIT to provide strategic leadership for the program. Each RIT consists of one or more civil society organizations active in conservation in the hotspot. The objective of the RIT is to convert the plans in the ecosystem profile into a cohesive portfolio of grants that achieves the objectives outlined in the logical framework. In each hotspot, CEPF will commission an independent evaluation of the incumbent RIT toward the end of the investment phase. This will comprise a review of the performance of the incumbent RIT and challenges, opportunities and lessons learned associated with the RIT role. In combination with the final assessment of the results of the hotspot investment (conducted as a separate exercise), this evaluation will enable future applicants for the RIT role (in the event of a re-investment) to be better informed about the experience of the incumbent RIT and the results achieved, and create a more competitive environment for all applicants.

3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals shall be submitted in one volume, in English, and consist of:

- Technical Proposal
- Financial Proposal

Technical Proposal

Should comprise of the following parts:

- Technical approach, methodology and detailed work plan. This part shall be between three to five pages long but may not exceed five pages.

The technical proposal should describe in detail how the offeror intends to carry out the requirement described in the scope of work below. The technical proposal should demonstrate a clear understanding of the work to be undertaken and the responsibilities of all parties involved.

- Management, key personnel and staffing plan. This part shall be between two and five pages long but may not exceed five pages. CVs for key personnel may be included in an annex to the technical proposal and will not count against the page limit.

Must have:

- Experience in relevant technical areas, e.g., monitoring and evaluation (at least five years).
- Master's degree in relevant natural resources-related field, e.g., monitoring and evaluation, with three years of experience, or bachelor's degree with five years of experience.
- Experience working with CEPF programs, or equivalent.

- Corporate capabilities, experience, past performance and references. This part shall be between two and four pages long but may not exceed four pages.

Financial Proposal

A detailed budget in USD. The budget shall include a budget narrative that explains the basis for the estimation of expenses. If required, supporting information must be provided in sufficient detail to allow for a complete analysis of the cost.

4. PROCESS AND BASIS FOR AWARD

The evaluation of the RIT will be undertaken by an independent consultant, selected through a competitive procurement process. Selection of consultants will be overseen by the Monitoring, Evaluation and Outreach Unit within the CEPF Secretariat. Award will be made to the consultant whose proposal is determined to be responsive to this call for proposals, meets the technical requirement, and is determined to represent the most advantage to CI.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Technical Approach, Methodology and Work Plan	40
- Personnel Qualification	30
- Past Performance – reference of similar work previously implemented	20
- Lowest Cost	10

Scope of Work, Deliverables and Deliverables Schedule

Evaluation of Lessons Learned in Relation to the Regional Implementation Team for the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

1) 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 designed to help safeguard the world's biodiversity hotspots. As one of the founding partners, Conservation International administers the global program through the CEPF Secretariat.

In each of the biodiversity hotspots where it invests, CEPF selects a regional implementation team (RIT) to provide strategic leadership for the program. Each RIT consists of one or more civil society organizations active in conservation in the hotspot. The objective of the RIT is to convert the plans in the ecosystem profile into a cohesive portfolio of grants that contributes to CEPF's long-term goals for the hotspot.

In the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, the role of RIT is performed by the IUCN Oceania Regional Office, based in Suva, Fiji. CEPF investment in this hotspot totals US\$9 million, for a program taking place from 2013 through early 2022. The investment includes the following countries: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

To capture lessons learned in relation to the RIT for the hotspot, CEPF will commission an independent evaluation. This evaluation will consider the performance of the RIT in relation to the geography of the hotspot, the capacity of civil society there, the budget allocated to the RIT, and its achievement of individual deliverables as defined in its grant agreement with CEPF. It is entirely distinct and separate from the formal "final assessment" of the portfolio, which is undertaken at the end of an investment phase to evaluate the overall impacts of CEPF investment in a hotspot.

2) Objective of the Evaluation

The objective of the evaluation is to inform decisions around CEPF's future involvement in the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot in the event that future funding becomes

available. This may include decisions by CEPF donors regarding selection of a RIT for a future phase of investment, and the optimum programmatic and management approaches for coordinating any future investment.

3) Criteria for Evaluation

The evaluation will look closely at the components and functions of the East Melanesian Islands RIT, as set out in the terms of reference, and evaluate the performance of each member against the following criteria:

- i) Relevance**
Were the activities undertaken relevant to the ecosystem profile, RIT terms of reference, the geography of the hotspot, the capacity of civil society there, and the global monitoring framework of CEPF?
- ii) Efficiency**
How efficiently was the budget allocated to the RIT converted into results?
- iii) Effectiveness**
What were the strengths and weakness of the RIT structure and capacities regarding effective delivery of results?

In addition to directly evaluating the performance of the RIT, lessons learned from the CEPF grants portfolio regarding the RIT role will be compiled and reviewed in the context of the following themes:

- iv) Coverage**
To what extent does the portfolio of grants awarded to date cover the strategic directions and investment priorities set out in the investment strategy for the hotspot?
- v) Impact**
To what extent have the targets set in the hotspot ecosystem profile for impacts on biodiversity conservation, human wellbeing, civil society capacity and enabling conditions been met?
- vi) Accessibility**
Does the grant portfolio involve an appropriate balance of international and local grantees, considering the relative strengths of different organizations regarding delivery of the investment strategy and considering the priority given by CEPF to building the capacity of local civil society?

vii) Adaptive management

In what ways has the development of the grant portfolio been constrained by risks (political/institutional/security/health) or taken advantage of unanticipated opportunities?

4) Formally Agreed Duties of the Regional Implementation Teams

The terms of reference of the East Melanesian Islands RIT consist of five components addressing administrative and programmatic functions. These five components were fulfilled via two contracts covering administration and program. Combined, these two sets of terms of reference represent the full scope of work undertaken by the East Melanesian Islands RIT.

Terms of Reference for Administrative Proposal	Functions
1. Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review.	Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of applications. Announce the availability of CEPF grants. Publicize the contents of the ecosystem profile and information about the application process. With the CEPF Secretariat, establish schedules for the consideration of proposals at pre-determined intervals, including decision dates. Establish and coordinate a process for evaluation of applications. Evaluate all letters of inquiry. Evaluate all proposals. Facilitate technical advisory committee review, where appropriate (including convening a panel of experts). Obtain external reviews of all applications over US\$250,000. Ensure that all application information is linked into the CEPF automated grants management system. Decide jointly with the CEPF Secretariat on the award of all grant applications of US\$20,000 and above. Communicate with applicants throughout the

	<p>application process to ensure applicants are informed and fully understand the process.</p>
<p>2. Manage a program of small grants; that is, grants of less than US\$20,000.</p>	<p>Announce the availability of CEPF small grants.</p> <p>Conduct due diligence to ensure sub-grantee applicant eligibility and capacity to comply with CEPF funding terms.</p> <p>Manage the contracting of these awards.</p> <p>Manage disbursement of funds to grantees.</p> <p>Ensure sub-grantee compliance with CEPF funding terms.</p> <p>Monitor, track, and document grantee technical and financial performance.</p> <p>Assist the Secretariat in maintaining the accuracy of the CEPF grants management database.</p> <p>Open a dedicated bank account in which the funding allocated by CEPF for Small Grants will be deposited, and report on the status of the account throughout the project. Convene a panel of experts to evaluate proposals.</p> <p>Conduct regular project site visits (at least once every six months) to monitor and document grantee technical and financial performance.</p> <p>Contact grantees regularly via email and telephone.</p> <p>Ensure that grantees complete regular (based on length of the project) technical and financial progress reports.</p> <p>Prepare bi-annual summary report to the CEPF Secretariat with detailed information of the Small Grants Programme, including names and contact information for all grantees, grant title or summary of grant, time period of grants, award amounts, disbursed amounts, and disbursement schedules.</p>
<p>3. Reporting and monitoring</p>	<p>Collect and report on data for portfolio-level indicators.</p>

	<p>Ensure quality of performance data submitted by grantees.</p> <p>Support the CEPF Secretariat to monitor programmatic performance of grantees.</p> <p>Verify completion of products, deliverables and short-term impacts by grantees.</p> <p>Review grantee financial reports in relation to programmatic performance.</p> <p>Support grantees to comply with requirements for completion of GEF tracking tools, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool.</p> <p>Support a mid-term learning exchange workshop to build institutional capacity of grantees and convene a final assessment of the CEPF portfolio.</p> <p>Conduct a mid-term assessment.</p> <p>Visit grantees to monitor their progress and ensure outreach, verify compliance and support capacity building.</p> <p>Provide guidance to grantees for the effective design and implementation of safeguard policies to ensure that these activities comply with the guidelines detailed in the CEPF Operations Manual and with the World Bank’s environmental and social safeguard policies. Provide additional support and guidance during the implementation and evaluation cycles at regular field visits to projects.</p>
<p>Terms of Reference for Programmatic Proposals</p>	<p>Functions</p>
<p>4. Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships and promote information exchange in the hotspot.</p>	<p>Serve as the lead point of contact for CEPF in relation to international donors, host country governments and agencies, and other potential partners within the hotspot.</p> <p>Facilitate information exchange among stakeholders.</p> <p>Communicate regularly with CEPF and partners about the portfolio through face-to-face meetings,</p>

	<p>phone calls, the internet (website and electronic newsletter) and reports to forums and structures.</p> <p>Provide regular communications and reports to the CEPF Grant Director on the progress of the project.</p> <p>Provide lessons learned and other information to the Secretariat to be communicated via the CEPF website.</p> <p>Disseminate results via multiple and appropriate media.</p> <p>Facilitate partnerships between stakeholders in order to achieve the objectives of the ecosystem profile.</p> <p>Build partnerships between and among grantees and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Promote collaboration and coordination among local or international donors.</p> <p>In coordination with CEPF’s Secretariat, ensure communication and collaboration with the six CEPF donors, as appropriate in the hotspot.</p> <p>Promote opportunities to leverage CEPF funds with donors and governments investing in the region.</p> <p>Visit stakeholders, and attend meetings and events to ensure collaboration, coordination and outreach.</p>
5. Build the capacity of grantees.	<p>Assist civil society groups in designing projects that contribute to the achievement of objectives specified in the ecosystem profile and a coherent portfolio of mutually supportive grants.</p> <p>Build institutional capacity of grantees to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.</p>

5) Duties

A consultancy firm (hereafter “the consultant”) is required to undertake an evaluation of lessons learned to inform reinvestment in the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, in the context of the abovementioned objective (Section 2). The consultant is required to field a team with experience of evaluating biodiversity conservation programs,

and with adequate knowledge of the three countries covered by the RIT.

The evaluation will consider the performance of the RIT in relation to the geography of the hotspot, the capacity of civil society there, the budget allocated, and their achievement of deliverables as defined in their individual grant agreement with CEPF. It will also consider the impacts of the investment to date (in terms of biodiversity, human wellbeing, civil society capacity and enabling conditions for conservation), based on the findings of the mid-term assessment for the hotspot and annual portfolio overviews.

Finally, the consultant will review the institutional landscape in each of the three countries and identify candidate organizations that could potentially perform the RIT role (either alone or as part of a consortium). The consultant will prepare a list of potential candidate organizations with information to include a brief description of the organization, their grant-making experience, their experience managing a project similar to that of the RIT, and the pros and cons associated with their assuming the role of RIT as lead or consortium member.

The evaluation will begin with a desk review based on the following documentation:

- The ecosystem profile for the hotspot.
- The final proposals for the RIT grants.
- The RIT grant agreements plus any amendments.
- Semi-annual performance reports prepared by the RIT.
- Supervision and monitoring reports prepared by the CEPF Secretariat.
- Summary data on the grant portfolio in the hotspot, exported from CEPF's grant management system.

The desk review will be complemented by interviews with relevant CEPF Secretariat staff, relevant RIT staff, staff of the host organization, a selection of CEPF grantees and applicants, and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., representatives of other donors, government agencies, etc.). The consultancy will be conducted virtually due to the pandemic. The consultant will be expected to organize all necessary meetings with stakeholders.

6) Deliverables

There will be two deliverables from the consultancy. The consultant will be responsible for preparing a report on lessons learned regarding the RIT role, suitable for inclusion in a future ecosystem profile. The consultant will also be responsible for preparing a confidential report on the programmatic and financial performance of the RIT and the identification of potential candidate organizations. The chapters in this confidential report will not be included in a future ecosystem profile. These two documents will inform

investment decisions by CEPF and its donors should there be a future phase of investment in the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot. Both documents must be in English.

7) Timeframe

The evaluation will be conducted between 1 October 2021, and 15 December 2021. Draft deliverables will be prepared no later than 30 November 2021, and submitted to the CEPF Secretariat for review. Final deliverables, incorporating comments from the CEPF Secretariat, will be completed by 15 December 2021.

The consultant shall also provide the CEPF Secretariat with periodic verbal briefings and meet with Secretariat staff, as requested.

The total amount of time for the assignment is 20 days and should include: allocations for literature review and interviews with CEPF Secretariat staff, RIT staff and grantees; preparation of the draft deliverables; a briefing for the CEPF Secretariat on the findings; and finalization of deliverables following incorporation of Secretariat comments.

8) Reporting

The consultant will work under the close supervision and direction of the senior director for monitoring, evaluation and outreach, or such other individual that the CEPF Secretariat may designate.