

## Call for Proposals

### Evaluation of Lessons Learned to Inform Reinvestment in the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Opening Date:</b>       | 18 August 2021  |
| <b>Closing Date:</b>       | 10 September 2021, 24:00 hours (U.S. EST)   |
| <b>Questions Due Date:</b> | 1 September 2021 (Questions should be sent to <a href="mailto:cepf@cepf.net">cepf@cepf.net</a> ). |
| <b>Submission:</b>         | Proposals should be sent to <a href="mailto:cepf@cepf.net">cepf@cepf.net</a> by the closing date. |
| <b>Location:</b>           | 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 Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot to inform reinvestment. The RIT provides strategic leadership for the program, which is implemented in four countries: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. Interested consultants or firms should submit a proposal by the closing date listed above.

The successful consultant/firm 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.

Given that CEPF intends to re-invest in selected hotspots, CEPF will commission an independent evaluation of incumbent RITs 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 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. Single spacing and 12-point font is recommended.

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. Single spacing and 12 pt font recommended. 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.
  - Fluency in English and French.
- **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. The 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 to Inform Reinvestment in the Madagascar and Indian Ocean 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 Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, the role of the RIT is performed by the Tany Meva Foundation located in Antananarivo, Madagascar. CEPF investment in this hotspot totals US\$12.27 million for a program taking place from January 2015 through June 2022. The investment includes the following countries: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles.

Prior to reinvestment in this hotspot, a process to select the RIT for the next phase of investment will be initiated. This process will be informed by an evaluation of lessons learned in relation to the incumbent RIT for the hotspot. This evaluation will consider the performance of the incumbent 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 investment decisions for the next phase of

CEPF investment in the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot in the following ways. First, the evaluation will inform decision-making by the CEPF donors regarding selection of a RIT for the next phase of investment by evaluating the performance of the incumbent RIT and reviewing the institutional landscape for potential competitors.

Second, the evaluation will enable the design of RIT proposals that incorporate lessons learned regarding the programmatic and management approaches adopted by the incumbent RIT.

Third, the evaluation will inform the preparation of a new ecosystem profile for the hotspot, by documenting challenges and opportunities encountered by the RIT while implementing a grants program to engage and strengthen civil society in conserving globally important biodiversity in the social, political and institutional context of the hotspot.

### **3) Criteria for Evaluation**

The evaluation will look closely at the components and functions of the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands RIT, as set out in the terms of reference, and evaluate the performance of the RIT 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 Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands RIT consist of nine components, which are:

1. Coordinate CEPF investment in the hotspot.
  - 1.1. Serve as the field-based technical representative for CEPF in relation to civil society groups, grantees, international donors, host country governments and agencies, and other potential partners within the hotspot.
  - 1.2. Ensure coordination and collaboration with CEPF's donors, in coordination with the CEPF Secretariat and as appropriate in the hotspot.
  - 1.3. Promote collaboration and coordination, and opportunities to leverage CEPF funds with local and international donors and governments investing in the region, via donor roundtables, experiential opportunities or other activities.
  - 1.4. Engage conservation and development stakeholders to ensure collaboration and coordination.
  - 1.5. Attend relevant conferences/events in the hotspot to promote synergy and coordination with other initiatives. • Build partnerships/networks among grantees in order to achieve the objectives of the ecosystem profile.

2. Support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices.
  - 2.1. Support civil society to engage with government and the private sector and share their results, recommendations, and best practice models. Build institutional capacity of grantees to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.
  - 2.2. Engage directly with private sector partners and government officials and ensure their participation in implementation of key strategies.
3. Communicate the CEPF investment throughout the hotspot.
  - 3.1. Communicate regularly with CEPF and partners about the portfolio through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, the internet (website and electronic newsletter) and reports to forums and structures.
  - 3.2. Prepare a range of communications products to ensure that ecosystem profiles are accessible to grant applicants and other stakeholders.
  - 3.3. Disseminate results via multiple and appropriate media.
  - 3.4. Provide lessons learned and other information to the Secretariat to be communicated via the CEPF website.
  - 3.5. Conduct exchange visits with other RITs to share lessons learnt and best practices.
  - 3.6. In coordination with the CEPF Secretariat, ensure communication with local representatives of CEPF's donors. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of applications.
4. Build the capacity of local civil society.
  - 4.1. Undertake a capacity needs assessment for local civil society.
  - 4.2. Support implementation of a long-term strategic vision for the hotspot geared toward enabling civil society to "graduate" from CEPF support.
  - 4.3. 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.
  - 4.4. Build institutional capacity of grantees to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.
  - 4.5. Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence government agencies.
  - 4.6. Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence the private sector.

5. Establish and coordinate a process for large grant proposal solicitation and review.
  - 5.1. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of applications.
  - 5.2. Announce the availability of CEPF grants.
  - 5.3. Publicize the contents of the ecosystem profile and information about the application process.
  - 5.4. With the CEPF Secretariat, establish schedules for the consideration of proposals at pre-determined intervals, including decision dates.
  - 5.5. Establish and coordinate a process for evaluation of applications.
  - 5.6. Evaluate all letters of inquiry.
  - 5.7. Facilitate technical review of applications (including, where appropriate, convening a panel of experts).
  - 5.8. Obtain external reviews of all applications over US\$250,000.
  - 5.9. Decide jointly with the CEPF Secretariat on the award of all grant applications.
  - 5.10. Communicate with applicants throughout the application process to ensure applicants are informed and fully understand the process.
6. Manage a program of small grants of US\$20,000 (US\$50,000 or less in select approved regions).
  - 6.1. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of small grant applications. • Announce the availability of CEPF small grants.
  - 6.2. Conduct due diligence to ensure sub-grantee applicant eligibility and capacity to comply with CEPF funding terms.
  - 6.3. Convene a panel of experts to evaluate proposals.
  - 6.4. Decide on the award of all grant applications of US\$20,000 or less (US\$50,000 or less in select approved regions).
  - 6.5. Manage the contracting of these awards. • Manage disbursement of funds to grantees. • Ensure small grant compliance with CEPF funding terms. • Monitor, track, and document small grant technical and financial performance. • Assist the Secretariat in maintaining the accuracy of the CEPF grants management database. • 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. • Ensure that grantees complete regular (based on length of the project) technical and financial progress reports. • Prepare semi-annual summary report to the CEPF Secretariat with detailed information of the



small grants program, 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.

7. Monitor and evaluate the impact of CEPF's large and small grants.
  - 7.1. Collect and report on data for portfolio-level indicators (from large and small grantees) annually as these relate to the logical framework in the ecosystem profile.
  - 7.2. Collect and report on relevant data in relation to CEPF graduation criteria for the hotspot.
  - 7.3. Collect and report on relevant data for CEPF's global monitoring indicators.
  - 7.4. Ensure quality of performance data submitted by large and small grantees.
  - 7.5. Verify completion of products, deliverables, and short-term impacts by grantees, as described in their proposals.
  - 7.6. Support grantees to comply with requirements for completion of tracking tools, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool.
  - 7.7. In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a mid-term assessment and a final assessment of portfolio progress (covering large and small grants). • Conduct regular site visits to large and small grantees to monitor their progress and ensure outreach, verify compliance and support capacity building.
  - 7.8. 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.
  - 7.9. In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a final assessment of portfolio progress and assist with preparation of report documentation.
8. Lead the process to develop, over a three-month period, a long-term strategic vision for CEPF investment.
  - 8.1. Mobilize expertise and establish an advisory group to ensure that the long-term vision engages with appropriate stakeholders.
  - 8.2. Undertake a review of relevant literature to ensure alignment of the long-term vision with other initiatives and avoid duplication of effort.
  - 8.3. Consult with key stakeholders to solicit their input into the development of the long-term vision. • Synthesize the results of the literature review and stakeholder consultations into a long-term strategic vision document.

8.4. Present the draft long-term vision to key stakeholders and revise the document according to their comments.

8.5. Prepare a progress report for presentation to the CEPF donors' working group.

#### 9. Reporting

9.1. Participate in initial week of RIT training.

9.2. Participate in two "supervision missions" per year; each to include at least two days in the office and a visit to grantees in the field (approximately two weeks).

9.3. Prepare quarterly financial reports and six-monthly technical reports.

9.4. Respond to CEPF Secretariat requests for information, travel, hosting of donors and attendance at a range of events to promote CEPF.

## 5) Duties

A consultancy firm (hereafter "the consultant") is required to undertake an evaluation of lessons learned to inform reinvestment in the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, in the context of the abovementioned objective (Section 2). The consultant is required to form a team with experience evaluating biodiversity conservation programs and with adequate knowledge of the four 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 to the RIT, and their achievement of individual deliverables as defined in their 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 four countries and identify potential candidate organizations that could 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
- Semi-annual supervision mission reports prepared by the CEPF Secretariat
- Annual portfolio overviews prepared by the CEPF Secretariat
- Mid-term assessment report 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 the future ecosystem profile. The consultant will also be responsible for preparing a confidential report on the programmatic and financial performance of the RIT as well as the identification of potential candidate organizations suitable to play the role of the RIT for the next phase of CEPF investment in the hotspot. The chapters in this confidential report will not be included in the ecosystem profile. These two documents will inform investment decisions by CEPF and its donors, particularly regarding selection of the RIT for the reinvestment phase in the Madagascar and Indian Ocean 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.