

Call for Letters of Inquiry Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

Small Grants

Eligible Countries:	Palestine ¹
Opening Date:	Tuesday 10 December 2019
Closing Date:	Thursday 30 January 2020
Budget:	US\$5,000 to US\$20,000
Project Timeframe:	Projects can start from 20 March 2020 at the earliest, and must be completed by 31 March 2022.

CEPF and BirdLife International, serving as [regional implementation team](#) (RIT) for the hotspot, are inviting proposals in the form of letters of inquiry (LOIs) for small grants from non-governmental organizations, community groups, private enterprises, universities and other civil society organizations. Applicants are advised to read this call for proposals document in full and submit LOIs under the scope of this call.

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 Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot is the second largest hotspot in the world and the largest of the world's five Mediterranean-climate regions. CEPF's niche for investment in the Mediterranean was formulated through a participatory process that engaged civil society, donor and governmental stakeholders throughout the region. The resulting investment strategy (2017-2022) is documented within the ecosystem profile, available [here \(PDF – 31 MB\)](#). This investment strategy comprises of a series of strategic directions, broken down into investment priorities outlining the types of activities that will be eligible for CEPF funding.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to the individual positions of the CEPF donors on the issue of the status of Palestinian territories.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Civil society groups, including non-governmental organizations, community groups, universities and private enterprises, may apply for funding. Individuals must work with civil society organizations to develop applications rather than apply directly.

Organizations must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions.

Government-owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can demonstrate that the enterprise or institution has:

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

Grants cannot be used for:

- the purchase of land, involuntary resettlement of people, or activities that negatively affect physical cultural resources, including those important to local communities.
- activities adversely affecting Indigenous Peoples or where these communities have not provided their broad support to the project activities.
- removal or alteration of any physical cultural property (includes sites having archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious, or unique natural values).

Proposed activities should observe all other relevant safeguard and social policies as set out on the [CEPF website](#).

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The scope of this call is limited to the types of activities and locations described below.

LOIs will **only be accepted for Strategic Direction 4 (conservation of plants)**, and for project activities **within Palestine**.

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 which **harmonize with existing national or regional initiatives**. Synergies with other organizations are also eligible, with one lead organization submitting the application, and project partners with clear roles stated in the LOI.

Applicants based outside of eligible countries may submit an LOI as long as the project deliverables are focused on the conservation needs within Palestine. International organizations are encouraged to involve local organizations or communities as project partners and explain how local stakeholders will be engaged as part of project implementation.

Strategic Direction 4: Conservation of Plants

The Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot is defined primarily on the basis of the presence of its unique botanical communities, with an exceptionally high number of endemic plants. This strategic direction is focused on the conservation of threatened plants, including improving knowledge on the distribution and conservation status of the Mediterranean's endemic plants.

The limited range and very specific habitat requirements of some threatened plants means that their conservation can be tackled effectively by local civil society organizations working on the ground with limited resources, often in partnership with protected areas managers or local land owners. Projects under this strategic direction will support direct conservation action, and aim to strengthen the botanical knowledge and skills of scientists, conservationists and land managers.

CEPF is looking for LOIs which:

- **Address Strategic Direction 4 through one or more of the investment priorities specified in Table 3.**
- **Implement activities within Palestine.**
- **Activities must be focused on the sites or plant species matching one or more of these criteria:**
 - Sites with plant species in threat category Critically Endangered (CR) in the [IUCN Global Red List](#).
 - Sites with plant species that have not yet been assessed in the Global Red List but that would qualify for CR according to the [IUCN Global Red List criteria](#) and thresholds.
 - Site restricted endemics (SRE), which include:
 - Taxa occurring in only one site (and nowhere else in the world)
 - Extent of occurrence less than 100 km²
 - Area of occupancy less than 10 km²

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Demonstrate that they are focused on one or several priority species or are addressing a priority need for the conservation of plants.
- Demonstrate that they will lead directly to action for the conservation of threatened and endemic plant populations.
- Include, where possible, a significant component of capacity building for plant conservation, either for the project implementers or their local partners.
- Address the conservation of sites where there is a demonstrable need for funding and opportunity for success.

Project proposals which focus on Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) identified in the ecosystem profile will be prioritized due to the known biodiversity value of these site. If conservation work is to be conducted outside of a KBA, the coordinates for the site/s must be included in the LOI.

Additional information about the site must be fully explained in the LOI (e.g., its ownership and management, if it is a protected area, if there are any local communities within or nearby it, and if there are any threats faced).

If a plant species is not currently assessed under the IUCN Global Red List, applicants must clearly state in the project rational why this plant species needs special conservation attention, using IUCN criteria and thresholds. If a site restricted endemic (SRE) species is proposed, the applicant must justify it against the criteria listed above. Justification may include references to previous work conducted for the species, details on the habitat where it occurs and the threats faced.

Table 1: Strategic Direction 4 and Investment Priorities

Strategic direction	Investment priorities
4: Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the conservation of plants that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges.	4.1: Increase knowledge and skills to support assessment and planning for the conservation of plants, and foster the emergence of a new generation of young professionals in plant conservation.
	4.2: Support integration of plant conservation into the management of protected areas.
	4.3: Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with land owners and managers.

Details on Investment Priorities under Strategic Direction 4:

- **Investment Priority 4.1** *Increase knowledge and skills to support assessment and planning for the conservation of plants, and foster the emergence of a new generation of young professionals in plant conservation.*

One of the challenges in continuing the process of identifying Plant KBAs, assessing the conservation status of plants, and taking action for their conservation, is the limited number of people in the region with the necessary botanical skills. CEPF will support projects that have a strong element of developing practical botanical skills, including survey, in situ protection and, in some cases, ex situ protection. This will involve working with traditional educational institutions (i.e., universities, research institutes, etc.), as well as working to improve the skills of other groups with the potential to contribute to plant conservation, including protected areas managers, members of voluntary societies and land managers.

- **Investment Priority 4.2** *Support integration of plant conservation into the management of protected areas.*

Populations of threatened plants are often located within protected areas but are still threatened because management (or lack thereof) does not address their specific conservation need. CEPF grantees will work with protected area managers to identify threats and potential solutions, and include specific actions for the preservation of endangered plants in the management plans for protected areas.

- **Investment Priority 4.3** *Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with land owners and managers.*

Many threatened plant populations survive in managed landscapes, outside protected areas, and are potentially threatened by changes in land-use practices. CEPF grantees will work with land users and landowners to identify threats and promote improved management practices to preserve rare plant populations.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications (LOIs) can be written in **English or Arabic**.

Please **download the letter of inquiry form** in the language of your choice:

- [English](#)
- [Arabic](#)

Applications must be submitted as a Word document (PDFs will not be accepted).

Applicants must submit their letter of inquiry by the deadline to CEPF-MED-RIT@birdlife.org.

You will receive an acknowledgement from the RIT confirming your submission.

The LOI review process will take approximately eight weeks from the deadline date. The review committee will select the strongest LOIs which meet the eligibility criteria in the sections above. All applicants will receive a response from the RIT following the review of their project.

Applications that have been accepted will be moved to the second stage and asked to elaborate their LOI with a more detailed budget and logframe. Final approved LOIs will be awarded a small grant, with an agreement made between BirdLife International, as the RIT for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, and the applicant's institution (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 Mediterranean Basin, which provides more detail on the types of activity CEPF will fund under each investment priority.

- Ecosystem Profile: [English \(PDF – 31 MB\)](#)
- Ecosystem Profile - Technical Summary: [English \(PDF – 4.6 MB\)](#), [Arabic \(PDF – 2.7 MB\)](#), [French \(PDF – 5 MB\)](#)
- Mediterranean Hotspot map [here](#)

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.

Help and resources:

- [Eligibility and How To Apply](#)
- [Safeguard Policies](#)
- [12 Tips for Getting Your Grant Idea Funded](#)
- [CEPF Project Database](#)

CONTACT

Before applying, applicants are encouraged to discuss project ideas and eligibility. Please contact Programme Officer Sharif Jbour at Sharif.Jbour@birdlife.org.

For general queries about the CEPF Mediterranean Basin Hotspot Programme, please contact Small Grant Manager Salwa Elhalwani, Small Grant Manager at Salwa.Elhalawani@birdlife.org, or visit www.birdlife.org/cepf-med.