

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
Twenty-fifth Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council  
Washington, D.C.  
24 June 2014  
8 a.m. – 11 a.m. EDT**

**Revision of the Regional Implementation Team Terms of Reference and Selection Process**

**Recommended Action Item:**

The Donor Council is asked to approve **Terms of Reference and Selection Process for the Regional Implementation Team**.

**Revision of the RIT Terms of Reference:**

The revision of the TORs for the RITs included the addition of key functions that would allow the RITs to become effective stewards of the long-term vision of the hotspots. This will particularly include roles in supporting civil society organizations in engaging with private sector actors and governments as well as seeking the financial sustainability of the long-term vision. In the process of revising the TORs we have also included changes to clarify the role of the RIT, incorporating suggestions made at the RIT Exchange that CEPF hosted in September 2013. The table below summarizes the key changes to the TORs.

Table 1. Additional functions to be included in an expanded RIT TOR

<b>PROPOSED NEW TOR for an EXPANDED CEPF</b>	<b>Functions</b>
<b>1</b>	Support civil society to engage with government and the private sector and adopt their results, recommendations, and best practice models.
<b>2</b>	Engage directly with private sector partners and ensure their participation in implementation of key strategies.
<b>3</b>	Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence government agencies.
<b>4</b>	Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence the private sector.
<b>CLARIFICATION OF TORs</b>	<b>Functions</b>

5	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, field visits or other activities.
6	Engage conservation and development stakeholders to ensure collaboration and coordination.
7	Facilitate the creation or strengthening of conservation-oriented networks.
8	Undertake a capacity needs assessment for local civil society.
9	Collect and report on relevant data for CEPF's global monitoring indicators.
10	Prepare a range of communications products to ensure that ecosystem profiles are accessible to grant applicants and other stakeholders.
11	Participate in initial week of RIT training.
12	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).

The additional functions have been incorporated into the current TOR, and these in turn have been revised into a cohesive description of the RIT role that fully integrates the programmatic and administrative functions the RIT. This change improves the existing description which assigns each component as either programmatic or administrative, and will eliminate much of the confusion that this situation has caused by two proposals being submitted in fulfillment of the RIT role. With the more efficient option of articulating the RIT duties in a single proposal, RIT applicants will be better able to conceive of their future role during the application process, CEPF Secretariat and Working Group reviewers will be able understand and evaluate proposals more efficiently, and during implementation, much time will be saved in reporting.

Expansion of the role of the RIT will have cost implications. Additional funds will be needed to ensure sufficient allocations for increased travel for engagement with government and private sector, increased number and scope of capacity building efforts, the expanded communications role and additional staff time to adequately perform the RIT role. These costs will vary across hotspots, depending on the size of the hotspot and number of countries.

The revised **Regional Implementation Team Terms of Reference and Selection Process** is presented below.

## **Regional Implementation Team Terms of Reference**

Nongovernmental organizations selected to function as Regional Implementation Teams for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) will provide strategic leadership for the program in each of the biodiversity hotspots approved for investment.

Each Regional Implementation Team (RIT) will consist of one or more civil society organizations active in conservation in the region. For example, a team could be a partnership of civil society groups or could be a lead organization with a formal plan to engage others throughout the implementation process, as well as complementing its structure overseeing implementation, such as through an inclusive advisory committee.

The objective of the Regional Implementation Teams will be to convert the plans in the ecosystem profile into cohesive portfolios of grants, noting that these will contribute to CEPF's long-term goals for each hotspot (or sub-region). The ecosystem profiles will support the implementation of the long-term vision of the hotspot and the RIT and associated organizations will play a key role in becoming the stewards over the long-run of these long-term visions.

The teams will provide local knowledge and insights and will represent CEPF in each hotspot. They will have primary responsibility for building a broad constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the objectives described in the ecosystem profiles and any regionally appropriate long-term conservation and development visions.

The teams will operate in a transparent and open manner, consistent with the CEPF mission and all provisions of the CEPF Operational Manual.

Organizations that are members of the Regional Implementation Team will not be eligible to apply for other CEPF grants within the same hotspot. Applications from formal affiliates of those organizations that have an independent operating board of directors will be accepted, and subject to additional external review.

### **STAFFING**

Staffing configurations may vary considerably depending on the size and number of countries in each hotspot. At a minimum, it is expected that each RIT have two full time staff to perform the roles of Team Leader and Small Grants Manager.

### **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

The RIT engagement coincides with the duration of investment described in the ecosystem profile. In general, this is for a period of five years. With the development of the long-term visions for the hotspots, it is envisioned that the RIT will play a key role in the implementation of this vision that will expand beyond the duration of the initial investment. CEPF plans to update the ecosystem profiles as many times as necessary so to achieve the targets set in the long-term visions. As such, it is possible that the RIT will play a key role updating the ecosystem profile and guiding its future implementation beyond the first period of investment.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Components	Functions
<p><b>1. Coordinate CEPF investment in the hotspot</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Ensure coordination and collaboration with CEPF’s donors, in coordination with the CEPF Secretariat and as appropriate in the hotspot</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Engage conservation and development stakeholders to ensure collaboration and coordination.</p> <p>Attend relevant conferences/events in the hotspot to promote synergy and coordination with other initiatives.</p> <p>Build partnerships/networks among grantees in order to achieve the objectives of the ecosystem profile.</p>
<p><b>2. Support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices</b></p>	<p>Support civil society to engage with government and the private sector and share their results, recommendations, and best practice models.</p> <p>Engage directly with private sector partners and government officials and ensure their participation in implementation of key strategies.</p>

Components	Functions
<p><b>3. Communicate the CEPF investment throughout the hotspot</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Prepare a range of communications products to ensure that ecosystem profiles are accessible to grant applicants and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Disseminate results via multiple and appropriate media.</p> <p>Provide lessons learned and other information to the Secretariat to be communicated via the CEPF website.</p> <p>Conduct exchange visits with other RITs to share lessons learnt and best practices.</p> <p>In coordination with the CEPF Secretariat, ensure communication with local representatives of CEPF’s donors.</p>
<p><b>4. Build the capacity of local civil society</b></p>	<p>Undertake a capacity needs assessment for local civil society.</p> <p>Support implementation of a long-term strategic vision for the hotspot geared toward enabling civil society to “graduate” from CEPF support.</p> <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> <p>Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence government agencies.</p> <p>Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence the private sector.</p>

Components	Functions
<p><b>5. Establish and coordinate a process for large grant (&gt;\$20,000) proposal solicitation and review</b></p>	<p>Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of applications.</p> <p>Announce the availability of CEPF grants.</p> <p>Publicize the contents of the ecosystem profile and information about the application process.</p> <p>With the CEPF Secretariat, establish schedules for the consideration of proposals at pre-determined intervals, including decision dates.</p> <p>Establish and coordinate a process for evaluation of applications.</p> <p>Evaluate all Letters of Inquiry.</p> <p>Facilitate technical review of applications (including, where appropriate, convening a panel of experts).</p> <p>Obtain external reviews of all applications over \$250,000.</p> <p>Decide jointly with the CEPF Secretariat on the award of all grant applications of more than \$20,000.</p> <p>Communicate with applicants throughout the application process to ensure applicants are informed and fully understand the process.</p>

Components	Functions
<p><b>6. Manage a program of small grants (≤\$20,000)</b></p>	<p>Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of small grant applications.</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>Convene a panel of experts to evaluate proposals.</p> <p>Decide on the award of all grant applications of \$20,000 or less.</p> <p>Manage the contracting of these awards.</p> <p>Manage disbursement of funds to grantees.</p> <p>Ensure small grant compliance with CEPF funding terms.</p> <p>Monitor, track, and document small grant 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.</p> <p>Ensure that grantees complete regular (based on length of the project) technical and financial progress reports.</p> <p>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.</p>

Components	Functions
<p><b>7. Monitor and evaluate the impact of CEPF’s large and small grants</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Collect and report on relevant data in relation to CEPF graduation criteria for the hotspot.</p> <p>Collect and report on relevant data for CEPF’s global monitoring indicators.</p> <p>Ensure quality of performance data submitted by large and small grantees.</p> <p>Verify completion of products, deliverables, and short-term impacts by grantees, as described in their proposals.</p> <p>Support grantees to comply with requirements for completion of tracking tools, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool.</p> <p>In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a mid-term assessment and a final assessment of portfolio progress (covering large and small grants).</p> <p>Conduct regular site visits to large and small 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>In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a final assessment of portfolio progress and assist with preparation of report documentation.</p>



Components	Functions
<p><b>8. Reporting</b></p>	<p>Participate in initial week of RIT training.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Prepare quarterly financial reports and six-monthly technical reports.</p> <p>Respond to CEPF Secretariat requests for information, travel, hosting of donors and attendance at a range of events to promote CEPF.</p>

## SELECTION PROCESS

The teams will be chosen on a transparent and competitive basis. A request for proposals will be distributed widely by the CEPF Secretariat. This will include direct distribution to all stakeholders who participated in the ecosystem profiling process for the region, publicizing the request for proposals on the CEPF global Web site and in the CEPF e-newsletter, and encouraging CEPF donor partners and well-known organizations both internationally and within the region to distribute the announcement through their regional networks.

The call for proposals will detail the opportunity presented to lead implementation in the relevant hotspot, and will include the Terms of Reference, criteria for evaluation, and a closing date for the receipt of proposals by the CEPF Secretariat. It will also include the maximum budget amount allocated for the Regional Implementation Team in the region and a link to the approved ecosystem profile on the CEPF Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net).

The CEPF Secretariat will host an informational session for all interested applicants to explain CEPF and the role of the RIT.

Applicants will be required to submit a proposal in the approved CEPF application template, including detailed project objectives (goal, purpose, outputs), the organization's comparative advantage in carrying out the role as a Regional Implementation Team, and clear performance indicators. In addition, the proposal must include a detailed budget, logical framework and five-year work plan and identify a single regional coordinator who will be principally responsible for carrying out these plans.

The Secretariat will analyze and rank the applications using the criteria described below. To maintain an open and objective selection process, any potential advantage gained as a result of involvement in creating the CEPF ecosystem profile for the region will not be considered as part of the assessment.

The Secretariat will present the applications and its analysis to the CEPF Working Group, which will develop a recommendation for the CEPF Donor Council. The final selection will be approved by the Donor Council.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Applications**

In assessing applications, the following capabilities will be considered:

#### **1. Capacity/Experience in Leading and Implementing a Biodiversity Conservation Program:**

Successful applicants will be nongovernmental organizations presenting substantial experience in biodiversity conservation in the region. Applicants should present a clear and compelling justification for their application. This should include how their institutional strategy would be advanced by the organization's stewardship of the CEPF strategy and would help to ensure sustainability of results beyond the CEPF implementation period. Other important indicators will include:

- A mission statement that is congruent with the objectives and priorities identified for the region in the ecosystem profile.
- Proposed key personnel, including their qualifications and proposed roles.
- An acknowledged position of leadership within the region's civil society sector.
- Demonstrated experience in working with partners (such as NGOs, community organizations, and the private sector) to improve the effectiveness of conservation programs.
- Demonstrated commitment to strengthening other less developed civil society organizations, stakeholders, to design and implement projects, and to engage with a range of partners.
- Well-established professional relationships with national and local government agencies and other sectors in the region.
- Ability to represent and widely communicate the CEPF mission, objectives, and opportunities, as well as experiences, lessons learned, and results.
- A strong commitment to monitoring and evaluation as indicated by functioning systems to monitor and evaluate the applicant's own programs.
- An existing sustainable conservation program in the region, demonstrated by its duration and record of support by other donors.

**2. Capacity/Experience in Administration and Financial Management:** A sound and tested financial and administrative system will be a key area for assessment in each application. Applicants should describe in detail their existing administrative and financial structures and how these structures would support effective and efficient implementation work. Among the financial and administrative factors for consideration are:

- Demonstrated ability to track, record, and account for funds received and disbursed.
- Segregation of duties. (For example, the person who makes the grant cannot be the same person who approves the payments or authorizes disbursement).
- Defined administrative/financial roles and a chart indicating the leadership and employee structure of the organization.
- Regular completion of reconciliations of money received and disbursed, in comparison with bank statements.
- Internal controls and objective criteria that guide the review of payment requests and other invoices.
- Systematic record keeping.
- Fraud and embezzlement safeguards.
- Ability to carry out the CEPF mission using locally appropriate languages in work with applicants and government officials, and to use English for all evaluations of proposals and reporting on grantee performance.
- Certified audits conducted on an annual basis with no material findings. Two most recent audits should be provided as part of the proposal.
- Ability to adapt or expand the applicant's own administrative systems to enable effective award, management, and monitoring of individual grants of up to \$20,000.