



Call for Proposals

Update of the Ecosystem Profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot

Opening date: 27 January 2025

Closing date: 3 March 2025

Location: cepf@cepf.net (CEPF, 2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 600, Crystal City VA 22202, USA)

1. Invitation

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, Fondation Hans Wilsdorf, the Global Environment Facility, 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. 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 requires an organization or consortium to lead a process to update the ecosystem profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot, to guide a new phase of investment in civil society organizations (CSOs) working to conserve the global biodiversity values of the hotspot. Qualified organizations or consortia are invited to submit a proposal by the closing date listed above, in compliance with this call for proposals and the scope of work described herein.

The result of this call for proposals will be the issuance of a grant between Conservation International, which administers CEPF on behalf of the global donors, and a single lead organization, which in turn, may have subordinate partners if it so proposes.

Proposals must be submitted electronically to cepf@cepf.net by the closing date listed above.

2. Background

The Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot, covering 860,000 square kilometers centered on the major mountain ranges of the Pamir and the Tien Shan, is remarkable for its relatively large amount of remaining natural habitat, high endemism and charismatic megafauna, particularly the iconic snow leopard. With peaks rising to over 7,000 meters, 20,000 glaciers, and isolated arid environments and valleys fed by snow melt, diverse ecosystems support the wild relatives of many cultivated fruits, nuts and herbaceous plants, and, overall, upwards of 5,000 plant species, of which 1,500 are endemic to the region. The region also includes 144 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), per the IUCN global standard, covering 149,000 square kilometers.

The hotspot includes parts of seven countries: southeastern Kazakhstan; most of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; eastern Uzbekistan; western China; northeastern Afghanistan; and a small montane part of southeastern Turkmenistan. CEPF began making grants to CSOs in the region in 2019, with a focus on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. To date, CEPF has awarded 100 grants to 70 unique organizations, for a combined amount of approximately US\$7.4 million. Grants have focused on better management of sites important for biodiversity conservation (including creation of new protected areas, better management of existing protected areas and better management of “production landscapes,” particularly for grazing and agriculture), conservation of threatened species, better management of corridors and capacity strengthening for CSOs.

CEPF investment in the Mountains of Central Asia is guided by an “ecosystem profile,” developed through an extensive consultation process. Each ecosystem profile sets out a situational analysis, based upon a review of biodiversity priorities, threats, policy environment, civil society context and patterns of conservation investment, and presents a consensus-based investment strategy, with broad stakeholder buy-in. The [ecosystem profile](#) for the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot was prepared in 2017, since when much has changed, including: the capacity of civil society and the characteristics of the political space in which it operates; the absolute and relative severity of threats to biodiversity, and their social, economic and political drivers; and patterns of conservation investment by public and private donors. There is a need, therefore, to update the ecosystem profile, so that the next phase of CEPF investment (2025-2030) addresses the highest priorities, takes advantage of emerging opportunities, and aligns well with investments by other funders.

The results of this process will be presented in a document titled *Ecosystem Profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot: 2025 Update*. CEPF places equal emphasis on the quality of the final product and of the rigor and inclusivity of the process to prepare it. The organization that leads this effort will deliver the final document but must produce it in a way that ensures inclusive, authentic stakeholder consultation and agreement. A good ecosystem profiling process will begin building partnerships and momentum well before CEPF makes its first grants under the new investment phase.

In short, the ecosystem profile will be a snapshot of the hotspot in 2025 that describes the state of, and threats to, biodiversity and the capacity of civil society to engage as a partner in conservation. The ecosystem profile:

1. Secures broad-based agreement on biological priorities for conservation.
2. Describes the main threats to biodiversity.
3. Provides an overview of civil society as a partner in conservation.
4. Defines CEPF’s investment strategy for a five-year period (2025-2030).

CEPF intends to present the final ecosystem profile to its governing body (the Donor Council) in late 2025. Upon approving the profile, the Donor Council will also approve a total amount to invest in the hotspot over a five-year period; grant-making will begin thereafter.

2.1. Conservation Outcomes

Biological priorities for CEPF investment are defined in terms of conservation outcomes. Conservation outcomes are the entire set of conservation targets in a hotspot that need to be achieved to prevent loss of global biodiversity. The CEPF investment strategy will be based upon these outcomes, first to ensure that CEPF investments are directed at the

conservation of global biodiversity, and second to enable measurement of the success of conservation investments.

Conservation outcomes exist at three scales, namely: (1) globally threatened species; (2) the sites that sustain them (i.e., KBAs); and (3) the corridors necessary to maintain the ecological and evolutionary processes upon which those sites depend. In defining outcomes at the species, site and corridor scales, CEPF identifies targets that are quantitative, justifiable and repeatable. CEPF will not try to achieve all these targets through its funding, but the investment strategy will address a subset of them: priority species, sites, and corridors.

For the purposes of the updated ecosystem profile, conservation outcomes will be defined based on available data only. The profiling team will be provided with datasets on KBAs and conservation corridors, to incorporate into the ecosystem profile, and be expected to generate lists of globally threatened species from the [IUCN Red List](#). Based on these available data, the profiling team will be expected to facilitate an expert-led process that reviews and, if necessary, updates the selection of priority species, sites and corridors for CEPF investment, based on the transparent application of a set of criteria.

2.2. Focus of the Profile

The ecosystem profile is built around a biodiversity hotspot, which, in this case, covers all or parts of seven countries. The ecosystem profile should address the entire hotspot, including terrestrial and freshwater. That said, limitations of time, resources, data availability and other factors will prevent the profile from addressing every subject with equal depth for each country and will prevent the team from engaging stakeholders equally in each country. Given the uneven distribution among countries with regard to opportunities to engage civil society in biodiversity conservation, CEPF expects applicants to propose a strategy of engagement and analysis that varies by country, featuring some combination of in-person and in-depth consultations, virtual consultations, remote engagement and desk studies.

Further, while the profile considers the political and biological entirety of the hotspot in its analysis, this does not presume the focus of the final investment strategy, the grants that are eventually awarded, or their outcomes.

Applicants should be clear in their proposals how, and to what degree, they will conduct stakeholder consultations in each country.

3. Eligibility and Exclusions

CEPF will accept proposals from any qualified organization, including NGOs, private consulting firms and universities. Government-owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can establish that the enterprise or institution: (i) has a legal personality independent of any government agency or actor; (ii) has the authority to apply for and receive private funds; and (iii) is not able to assert a claim of sovereign immunity.

Organizations may choose to form a consortium for the purposes of submitting a proposal. If a consortium is submitting a proposal in response to this call, then one organization must be clearly identified as the lead. The lead organization will have final responsibility for submitting the consolidated proposal, and, if successful, will be responsible for leading implementation, reporting to CEPF, receiving and disbursing funds, and coordinating the other members of the consortium.

The organization (or organizational members of a consortium) that prepares the ecosystem profile will **not** be precluded from receiving grants during the subsequent investment phase.

4. Period of Performance

The period of performance is anticipated to be from 24 March to 31 December 2025.

5. Place of Performance

The place of performance is the regular place of work of the members of the profiling team. Applicants should plan and budget for travel to and within the Mountains of Central Asia region, as required to undertake the necessary stakeholder consultations.

6. Budget

The total budget that CEPF will allocate for this award, inclusive of all taxes, management support costs or other indirect costs, is US\$200,000 (two hundred thousand United States dollars).

7. Solicitation, Review and Award

The CEPF Secretariat is responsible for the analysis of applications, selection of the top-ranked applicant and negotiation with the top-ranked applicant leading to the award of a grant in accordance with CEPF's grant-making procedures.

8. Supervision by the CEPF Secretariat

The selected profiling team will report to the CEPF Secretariat. The Secretariat will provide direct and ultimate guidance to the team.

9. Scope of Work

9.1. Ecosystem Profile – Detailed Document

The 2017 version of the ecosystem profile should be used as a starting point. Wherever text remains accurate and relevant, it can be retained. Wherever more recent data or analysis are available, they should be incorporated. Key scientific papers and reports published since 2017 should be incorporated, where relevant, but an exhaustive literature review is not expected. It is anticipated that Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10 will be lightly edited, to incorporate new information and remove superfluous information, for greater brevity and readability. It is anticipated that Chapters 3, 6, 9 and 11 to 15 will require more significant updates, to incorporate new information and the results of stakeholder consultations conducted during the ecosystem profiling exercise.

The ecosystem profile is composed essentially of two sections. The first section consists of Chapters 1-11, which provide a situational analysis for the hotspot as a whole. These chapters form the basis for the CEPF investment niche and strategy, which are presented in the second section, consisting of Chapters 12-15. The second section focuses only on those species, sites, corridors and thematic approaches that are prioritized for CEPF investment.

The ecosystem profile will be drafted in professionally edited English and adhere to the structure below. (Note that while drafts of the document will be in English, the final version will be in both English and Russian.)

Chapter	Illustrative Page Length*
Executive Summary	3
Chapter 1. Introduction	2
Chapter 2. Background	4
Chapter 3. Lessons Learned from Previous CEPF Investment	8
Chapter 4. Biological Importance of the Hotspot	10
Chapter 5. Conservation Outcomes for the Hotspot	20
Chapter 6. Threats to Biodiversity in the Hotspot	15
Chapter 7. Socioeconomic Context of the Hotspot	6
Chapter 8. Policy Context of the Hotspot	12
Chapter 9. Civil Society Context of the Hotspot	15
Chapter 10. Climate Change Assessment	15
Chapter 11. Assessment of Current Conservation Investment	15
Chapter 12. CEPF Investment Niche	2
Chapter 13. CEPF Investment Strategy and Programmatic Focus	25
Chapter 14. Results Framework	5
Chapter 15. Sustainability	3
Total	160
References	
Appendices	

* Page count does not include tables or figures.

Chapter 1. Introduction. This chapter describes the conservation imperative for the hotspot, introduces CEPF as a global program and gives a general overview of the hotspot. It describes the approach, conservation outcomes and strategy development.

The chapter should include the following, at a minimum:

Map: Map of the hotspot.

Chapter 2. Background. This chapter describes the process behind the development of the profile, the stakeholder consultations and the partners involved.

The chapter should include the following, at a minimum:

Table: Dates and participant numbers of stakeholder consultations.

Chapter 3. Lessons Learned from Previous CEPF Investment. This chapter summarizes lessons learned from previous phases of CEPF investment. This chapter should draw on the reports from the mid-term assessment, results from the final assessment of February 2025 (as they become available), and the independent evaluation of the Regional Implementation Team (RIT).

Chapter 4. Biological Importance of the Hotspot. This chapter describes the geographic, climatic and biological history of the hotspot, with a consideration of both terrestrial and freshwater realms. The chapter provides a summary of species diversity, levels of endemism and global threat status among major taxonomic groups in the hotspot (focusing on taxonomic groups for which data are available). The chapter also describes major ecosystem services, including freshwater flows, support to food production, support

to cultural services, carbon sequestration and disaster mitigation, among others. The chapter will make extensive reference to existing data sources and documentation. It should be summary in nature.

Chapter 5. Conservation Outcomes for the Hotspot. This chapter describes the conservation outcomes (or targets) for the hotspot. Conservation outcomes represent the quantifiable set of species (i.e., globally threatened species), sites (i.e., KBAs), and higher-scale spatial units (i.e., conservation corridors) that are indispensable to conserving the global biodiversity values of the hotspot.

1. Species outcomes will be based on a comprehensive list of globally threatened species occurring in the hotspot, corresponding to categories Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU) on the current IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
2. Site outcomes will be based on a comprehensive list, with accompanying maps, of KBAs for the hotspot. The profiling team will be provided with up-to-date lists and GIS layers of KBAs in the hotspot, based on the World Database of KBAs. The team will not be responsible for updating this list.
3. Corridor outcomes are higher-scale spatial units necessary to maintain ecological and evolutionary processes at the landscape scale. The profiling team will be provided with a list and GIS layer of conservation corridors in the hotspot. The team will have the option of revising the list and/or boundaries of conservation corridors, in consultation with stakeholders, if deemed necessary to reflect current knowledge.

The chapter should include the following, at a minimum:

Maps: KBAs and conservation corridors in each country.

Table: Summary data on number of globally threatened species in the hotspot, by country.

Table: Summary information on KBAs in the hotspot, by country.

Table: Summary information on conservation corridors in the hotspot.

Chapter 6. Threats to Biodiversity in the Hotspot. This chapter will describe and prioritize threats to biodiversity in the hotspot and explore their root causes and enabling factors. Stakeholder input is expected for this chapter in relation to threat prioritization addressed by the CEPF investment strategy. The chapter should make extensive reference to existing studies and analyses of direct threats and root causes, while focusing on those issues that could conceivably be addressed by CEPF-funded projects.

The chapter should include the following, at a minimum:

Table: Ranking of threats to biodiversity in the hotspot; overall and by country.

Chapter 7. Socioeconomic Context of the Hotspot. This chapter provides an overview of the socioeconomic situation of the hotspot, an analysis of how this affects conservation outcomes, and how it could influence the strategic directions for CEPF actions. The chapter should make extensive reference to existing studies and analyses. The chapter should highlight the most relevant matters in each country, which could include some, but not necessarily all, of the following: population, demographics, migration, poverty, and economic activities related to natural resource use (e.g., agriculture, energy, fisheries, mining, forestry, tourism). The emphasis should be on analysis of the implications for CEPF investment in the hotspot and not merely on describing the current situation. This

chapter must include a gender-based analysis, considering the implications of gender for CEPF grant making and taking account of intersectionality with other identity factors (ethnicity, ability, etc.).

The chapter should include the following, at a minimum:

Table: Basic population statistics for the hotspot, by country.

Table: Basic economic indicators for the hotspot, by country.

Chapter 8. Policy Context of the Hotspot. This chapter briefly reviews the political situation in each country, summarizes economic development policies and strategies, and assesses how the policy context affects biodiversity conservation. Noting the recommended page length of the chapter, the text should make extensive reference to existing studies and analyses. Again, the emphasis should be on analysis of the policy context and its implications for CEPF investment, not mere description. The chapter should highlight some, but not necessarily all, of the following:

1. The legal status of protected areas and corridors: who owns them; and which public agencies are responsible for their management.
2. Overview of trends in governance: decentralization; political conflicts; and security issues.
3. Overview of near-term policy initiatives affecting resource management in KBAs and corridors.
4. Overview of the institutional and policy framework for conservation, including description of the mandates and capacity of principal agencies, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, major national laws, and international conventions.
5. Overview of policies and regulations related to the financing of conservation.

Chapter 9. Civil Society Context of the Hotspot. For the purposes of this chapter, CEPF defines civil society as including, *inter alia*, local and international NGOs, academic institutions (including universities), professional organizations, community-based organizations, Indigenous people's organizations, cooperatives, and private companies. As CSOs are the recipients of CEPF support, this chapter informs the CEPF investment strategy in the following ways:

1. Which organizations, by name or type, are working on biodiversity conservation, directly *or* indirectly. This implies looking beyond organizations with a strict conservation mission to social development organizations in relevant geographies.
2. Do these organizations have sufficient capacity to implement conservation projects effectively, or do they have limitations in terms of human resources, financial resources, management systems, strategic planning, or project delivery?
3. Describe existing civil society networks.
4. Describe existing efforts to strengthen CSOs or promote networking among them.
5. Describe the operating environment for civil society organizations in terms of legal framework, political space, funding availability, and ability to convene meetings, receive funding and manage sites.

The profiling team should note that CEPF is conducting a process now to further understand its role in promoting organizational development beyond more traditional measures of capacity building. The CEPF Secretariat will work closely with the profiling team to ensure proper incorporation of CEPF's new strategy on organizational

development, expecting that this strategy will be incorporated into Chapter 13 and its thematic priorities for investment.

Chapter 10. Climate Change Assessment. This chapter should rely on reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other relevant documents to place conservation outcomes in the context of climate change. Reference should be made to other sources that provide an overview of the hotspot's climatic history, how this has shaped the biota, and the projected impacts of climate change on human populations and biodiversity, including the potential impacts of the human response to climate change on natural areas. Reference should also be made to documents providing recommendations for strengthening policies and approaches for adaptation and mitigation. The chapter should present an analysis of opportunities for investment in nature-based solutions to climate change, such as ecosystem-based adaptation.

Chapter 11. Assessment of Current Conservation Investment. To define the best use of CEPF funds, this chapter describes other investments working toward biodiversity conservation, whether these investments be public or private, foreign or domestic. Emphasis should be given to funders supporting CSOs in the hotspot. While lists of relevant donor projects can be presented as appendices and summarized in the text, the purpose of this chapter is not simply to list investments but to analyze them, in terms of trends over time, geographic and thematic gaps, effectiveness, and opportunities for leverage.

Chapter 12. CEPF Investment Niche. Based on the preceding description of the conservation outcomes and investment context, this chapter identifies how CEPF investment will complement (and build upon) investments by other funders discussed in Chapter 11, in relation to the needs and opportunities described in Chapters 3 to 10. The niche frames the investment strategy (Chapter 13) by articulating the overall approach to CEPF investment in the hotspot.

Chapter 13. CEPF Investment Strategy and Programmatic Focus. This chapter presents a five-year strategy for investment in engaging and supporting CSOs to advance the conservation of global biodiversity in the hotspot. It identifies priority sites and corridors, to guide investment by CEPF and other funders to the highest priority geographic areas. It also identifies priority species, to guide investment to globally threatened species whose conservation needs cannot adequately be addressed by general habitat protection at the site-scale or landscape-scale. Finally, the chapter identifies thematic priorities for investment, to ensure that CEPF and other funders support strategies that deliver impactful, cost-effective and sustainable conservation, with a leading role for CSOs. Thematic priorities are presented as investment priorities, grouped into strategic directions. This chapter must reflect input from stakeholders consulted during the ecosystem profiling process. The chapter should have the following structure.

1. Priority species outcomes, with a discussion and rationale for prioritization.
2. Priority site outcomes, with a discussion and rationale for prioritization.
3. Priority corridor outcomes, with a discussion and rationale for prioritization.
4. Strategic directions and subordinate investment priorities, with a discussion of eligible types of projects under each of these themes.

The chapter should include the following, at a minimum:

Table: Priority species for CEPF investment.

Table: Priority sites for CEPF investment.

Table: Priority corridors for CEPF investment [if relevant to the investment strategy.]

Table: CEPF strategic directions and investment priorities for the hotspot.

Maps: Priority KBAs and corridors in the hotspot [at least one map per country.]

Chapter 14. Results Framework. The results framework defines one or more indicators for each strategic direction in the investment strategy. Each indicator has a realistic target, commensurate with the amount of money allocated for grant making. It should be phrased in relation to the needs of the region, the CEPF [Global Monitoring Framework](#), [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) targets, and United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#). (The CEPF Secretariat will work closely with the profiling team on the structure of the logical framework and any quantifiable targets.)

Chapter 15. Sustainability. This chapter describes how CEPF investment during 2025-2030 will result in sustainable conservation results. The chapter may consider any relevant angle, including: how investments will lead to greater engagement of civil society in conservation; how investments strengthen the institutional capacity of civil society; how investments change the availability of funding for civil society; how investments build broader constituencies of support for biodiversity situation; and how investments create larger networks that catalyze action.

References. Include complete references for all literature cited in the profile.

Appendices. If this information is not directly incorporated in tabular format in the preceding chapters, include the following as appendices:

1. Table of all species outcomes (i.e., all globally threatened species, not only the priorities in Chapter 13) in the hotspot.
2. Table of all site outcomes (i.e., all KBAs, not only on the priorities in Chapter 13) in the hotspot.
3. Table of all conservation corridors in the hotspot (i.e., not only the priorities in Chapter 13).
4. Table of provisional priority species [if relevant to the investment strategy.]
5. Table of major current investments in biodiversity conservation in the hotspot.
6. Table of major current investments in nature-based solutions to climate change in the hotspot.

Other appendices may be included as relevant.

9.2. Technical Summary

The purpose of the Technical Summary is to make the key information and analysis in the ecosystem profile more readily accessible to CEPF's donors and government partners in the hotspot countries. It will be 30 pages in length, inclusive of maps and tables. It will follow a similar structure to the ecosystem profile but present information in an abbreviated format. It will be drafted and presented in English, with a Russian translation, concurrent with the second draft of the full ecosystem profile. After review by the CEPF Working Group, it will be revised and presented to the CEPF Donor Council, as a companion document to the final ecosystem profile.

9.3. Stakeholder Consultation Process

CEPF intends that the drafting of the ecosystem profile document be much more than a desk study. Rather, it is a process of engagement and consensus-building among government agencies, donors and civil society actors, with the result being a document that has broad-based support. To accomplish this, the profiling team is expected to:

1. Participate in one-day briefing/orientation meeting with the CEPF Secretariat, either in person in Arlington, Virginia, or virtually via video conference (April 2025).
2. Create an Advisory Committee of experienced conservationists to seek guidance on methodologies for data collation and analysis, key data sources and literature, and approaches to stakeholder engagement (May 2025 and throughout the process).
3. Convene regular management meetings (virtual) of principal authors and contributors to the document and process.
4. Organize and hold a series of consultations with key government, private sector, donor and civil society stakeholders in the hotspot to seek their input into the ecosystem profile, especially Chapters 6, 9 and 11 to 13. These consultations can be organized virtually or in person, and by country or by theme.
5. Under the guidance of the CEPF Secretariat and the Advisory Committee, prepare a full draft of the ecosystem profile for review by a technical Working Group made up of representatives of CEPF's global donors.
6. Present the draft ecosystem profile at a virtual meeting of the Working Group.
7. With the CEPF Secretariat, respond to comments from the Working Group, to prepare a final draft for submission to the CEPF Donor Council for approval.

Given the limited funds for this exercise and considering the challenges of engaging with stakeholders in some parts of the hotspot, the methods and depth of consultation will vary by country. The profiling team should be prepared to use phone, e-mail or online consultations to engage with some stakeholders, in addition to in-person meetings.

The profiling team must consider that stakeholders extend beyond traditional conservation actors (that is, environmental NGOs, research institutions and universities, government agency protected area authorities, and donor representatives with a conservation remit), to include the major social development and private sector actors in the region.

9.4. Timeframe, Milestones, Deliverables, and Payment Schedule (*to be finalized upon grant award*)

This timeframe below, up until the submission of the first draft of the ecosystem profile (Deliverable 10 in the table below), is illustrative and should guide applicants. After the submission of the first draft, applicants should view the timing and actions as static and defined by the formal review and revision process required by the CEPF Working Group and Donor Council. The timeframe, milestones, and deliverables will become a formal part of the grant agreement with the selected applicants.

Payment will occur upon inception, quarterly thereafter, and upon completion, subject to the submission of deliverables and acceptance by the CEPF Secretariat.

After submission and scoring of proposals, CEPF will ask the top-ranked applicant to propose an indicative payment schedule, per the below, that reflects the anticipated cash demands implied in their budgets. Actual quarterly payments will be made based on an acceptable cash flow projection indicating cash on-hand and anticipated expenses for the upcoming quarter. Only expenses for actual, reasonable, and documented costs as authorized in the approved budget will be allowed.

Invoice	Date	Deliverable	Amount (USD)
1	24-Mar-25	No deliverable / agreement signature	\$tbd
	8-Apr-25	1. Electronic announcement of the ecosystem profile updating process	
		2. List of key participant stakeholders and draft stakeholder analysis	
		3. Draft schedule of planned stakeholder consultations	
	23-Apr-25	4. Final schedule and agenda for all stakeholder consultations	
	24-May-25	5. Draft list of globally threatened species, KBAs and conservation corridors	
	8-Jun-25	6. Draft chapter on conservation outcomes	
2	1-Jul-25	Invoice for period of April - June 2025	\$tbd
	24-Jul-25	7. Draft strategic directions and investment priorities 8. Draft logical framework and numeric targets	
	24-Aug-25	9. Full draft of ecosystem profile per SOW Item 9.1 (i.e., "Draft 1"), submitted for CEPF Secretariat review	
	8-Sep-25	10. Summary proceedings of all stakeholder consultations (i.e., date, location, agenda, final participant list, photos and bulleted list of stakeholder feedback on major outputs)	
	23-Sep-25	11. Revised ecosystem profile per CEPF Secretariat comments, in English (i.e., "Draft 2"), submitted for CEPF Working Group review 12. Russian translation of Deliverable 11	
3	1-Oct-25	Invoice for period of July - September 2025	\$tbd
	1-Oct-25	13. 30-page technical summary in English 14. Russian translation of Deliverable 13 15. PowerPoint presentation for CEPF Working Group	
	16-Nov-25	16. Revised ecosystem profile addressing comments of Working Group (i.e., "Draft 3"), submitted for CEPF Donor Council review 17. Final contact list of all individuals consulted for the ecosystem profile (i.e., name, position, organization, telephone, electronic mail, geographic location) 18. GIS layer of conservation corridors	
4	1-Jan-25	Invoice for period of October - December 2025	
Total			\$200,000

10. Provision of Facilities

CEPF will make available sample ecosystem profiles, sample agendas for stakeholder consultations and lists of contacts. CEPF will also provide existing KBA data and will identify model or sample chapters from past profiles to guide the writing. The profiling team will otherwise be expected to work from its own premises conduct desk studies and to plan travel to the region for stakeholder consultations independently.

11. Personnel

Writing the ecosystem profile and leading the process requires a team of experts with a broad set of skills. Based on past experience, CEPF advises applicants to provide for the following:

A **Team Leader** with multiple years of experience designing and managing multi-faceted conservation programs, in one or more countries of the region; demonstrated ability to lead teams of experts, facilitate stakeholder-driven processes, and coordinate with donors and government counterparts to develop an outcomes-based conservation strategy; and ability to write and synthesize a complex document similar to an ecosystem profile.

A person who understands the sources and mechanisms of **finance for conservation**, who can synthesize and analyze data on conservation investments, update Chapter 11 of the ecosystem profile, and identify gaps and opportunities for CEPF investment that inform the investment strategy.

An expert in **Civil Society Organizations** who can lead or synthesize the analysis of the capacity of potential CEPF partners in the region, with demonstrated knowledge and experience of the roles played by these groups and the constraints they face.

If not captured in the above, **other experts** will provide complementary skills to update other chapters listed in the scope of work for the ecosystem profile, above.

12. Instructions for the Preparation of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted in English.

If a consortium of organizations is submitting a proposal, the proposal should reflect the inputs and capabilities of the entire consortium. After evaluation and prior to grant award, CEPF may require some of the documents detailed below from each consortium member.

Applicants are advised to read this section carefully in conjunction with Section 15 (Evaluation Criteria) to understand the relative weighting CEPF will use in evaluating proposals.

Proposals should be submitted electronically to cepf@cepf.net by the closing date listed on the first page of this call. Files should be submitted in MS Word, MS Excel, PDF or other standard format. The budget file requested below must be submitted in a functioning Excel spreadsheet.

12.1 Cover Letter

Applicants should include a cover letter to their proposals listing all documents submitted. The cover note should clearly list the name of the organizational chief executive, and, if different, the name(s) of all parties with the ability to legally bind the organization and the name(s) of all parties whom CEPF should contact for clarifications and negotiations. The cover note should also provide complete mailing address, street address (if different), electronic mail address(es), and telephone numbers.

12.2 Organizational Capabilities (no page limit)

Provide documentation showing evidence of the ability to complete the tasks described in the scope of work. This should include, at a minimum:

1. Basic organizational information, including: year organization established; total permanent staff globally and in the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot; and organizational history and mission statement.

2. Relevant experience in the countries of the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot.
3. Experience managing multi-disciplinary efforts that are based on applied conservation science.
4. Experience facilitating stakeholder consultations.
5. Experience preparing programmatic design documents.
6. Experience working with donors, governments, communities, the private sector and other stakeholders on conservation and development issues, including building alliances and networks of stakeholder groups to achieve conservation goals.

12.3 Technical Approach (maximum 3 pages)

1. Applicants should demonstrate their understanding of conservation issues in the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot.
2. Applicants should demonstrate their understanding of potential stakeholders in the hotspot; that is both participants in the ecosystem profiling process, as well as civil society actors that could receive CEPF support during implementation.
3. Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge of work similar to, or that will serve as an input to, the ecosystem profile. There are multiple compendiums and analyses of conservation issues in the overall region and individual countries. The successful applicant will reflect on how it can build on this existing work.
4. Applicants should propose a tentative plan for the stakeholder consultation process, including, to the extent possible, locations of workshops and how these might be arranged geographically, thematically, or by types of participants.

12.4 Curricula Vitae of Key Personnel

This work effort will take place over a tight timeframe and a primary basis of selection will be the expert personnel who are immediately available to begin work. Applicants must identify, by name, the team leader and at least two more additional experts who will lead this process. Applicants must provide curricula vitae for these individuals with the proposal. Proposals lacking curricula vitae will be considered non-responsive. Individual team members are expected to have, collectively, extensive experience in the Mountains of Central Asia and expertise in applied conservation science, civil society strengthening, and the socio-economic and political conditions of the region.

12.5 Workflow and Team Structure Diagrams

Provide, as appropriate, workflow diagrams (e.g., Gantt charts), team structure diagrams or any other visual element better explaining how technical activities will take place, when they will take place, and who will be responsible for leading them.

12.6 Consortium Description

If a consortium of organizations is applying, applicants should explain the contractual arrangements that will be made between the lead applicant and subordinate partners.

12.7 Budget

Please refer to the attached budget template in Excel.

Concurrent with the release of this call, CEPF is providing each of the applicants with a budget template in Excel displaying 12 primary line items: salaries/benefits; consultancies

and professional services; occupancy; telecommunications; postage and delivery; supplies; furniture and equipment; maintenance; travel and special events; bank and insurance fees; management support costs; and sub-grants. Some of these have multiple sub-items. Applicants *must use this template*. If a consortium of organizations is applying, each subordinate organization should have a parallel budget on a separate worksheet, all of which should feed into the lead applicant's worksheet, where the costs of each subordinate organization should be shown under the sub-grants line.

The final ecosystem profile document should be prepared in professional quality English and a Russian translation. As such, if the proposed personnel do not otherwise have these capabilities, applicants should include an appropriate budget for a professional editor.

The Excel file provided must be functioning and not "locked" in any way. Worksheets should show all calculations, including unit costs, total units and totals through the life of the activity.

CEPF allows for management support costs up to a maximum of 13 percent of the direct costs. Management support costs must reflect actual shared costs and must be justified with supporting documentation, such as audited financial statements. CEPF does not allow the application of a fee, profit, tax or any other cost that could not otherwise be accounted for directly.

Provide a brief companion narrative if the budget is not otherwise clear. The companion narrative should explain any individual worksheet cells, budget elements, or assumptions that are not self-evident in the Excel file or otherwise explained in the proposal (for example, an applicant's approach to stakeholder consultations will make certain assumptions about the number of travelers whose costs are borne by this grant and the location and duration of consultations.)

13. Financial Questionnaire and Tax Declaration

After submission and scoring of proposals, CEPF will ask the top-ranked applicant to complete the [financial questionnaire](#) linked here. The questionnaire itself requests further documentation about your organization, including financial statements, auditor statements and registration/incorporation certification.

The top-ranked applicant will also be required to submit a United States Internal Revenue Service [W-8BEN-E form](#) related to tax withholding and reporting.

14. Security Screening

The top-ranked applicant will subsequently be required, per United States law, to complete [forms](#) demonstrating compliance with anti-terrorism statutes.

15. Evaluation Criteria

CEPF will make a best value determination of technical proposals in relation to proposed budgets. The least-cost budget will not necessarily be ranked the highest for evaluation purposes.

15.1 Technical Evaluation

CEPF will use the scorecard below for the technical evaluation of proposals. The scorecard shows the questions that reviewers will use and the relative weighting of each category. Applicants should ensure that each of these points is adequately addressed in their proposal.

Proposal Technical Evaluation Scorecard

1	Organizational Experience	Points
1.1	Do the applicant and its partners have relevant experience in conservation science and GIS?	30
1.2	Do the applicant and its partners have relevant experience in analyzing civil society, policy, and socioeconomic conditions in terms of designing a conservation program?	
1.3	Do the applicant and its partners have relevant experience in the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot?	
1.4	Does the lead organization demonstrate experience managing programs of similar size, scale, and complexity as that of the ecosystem profiling team?	
2	Personnel	Points
2.1	Does the applicant propose a clear and viable personnel plan, including names, resumes, position titles, job descriptions, level of effort, work location, and reporting lines of authority?	50
2.2	Does the applicant submit the name and resume a single, dedicated team leader, and does this person have the appropriate technical skills/experience and appropriate managerial skills/experience?	
2.3	Does the applicant propose, by name and resume, personnel other than the team leader, and do these people have appropriate technical skills/experience and appropriate managerial skills/experience?	
2.4	Do the proposed team members have, individually or collectively, the language skills necessary to operate effectively in the hotspot?	
2.5	Does the applicant propose a plan for recruitment and/or mobilization of "to be determined" personnel, including job descriptions, job qualifications, and curricula vitae of personnel from the applicant's organization who will perform relevant duties while recruitment is pending?	
3	Proposed Technical Approach	Points
3.1	Does the applicant demonstrate a clear understanding of the KBA methodology and conservation outcomes as these relate to the ecosystem profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot?	20
3.2	Does the applicant demonstrate a clear understanding of civil society in Mountains of Central Asia and the role it will play in both the production of the ecosystem profile and the eventual recipient of CEPF grants?	
3.3	Does the applicant demonstrate a knowledge of existing work similar to the ecosystem profile, or relevant inputs, and suggest a way to efficiently build upon this?	
3.4	Does the applicant propose a clear plan for engagement of stakeholders at multiple levels, in multiple locations, and across multiple disciplines to both produce the ecosystem profile document and ensure a collaborative process that serves as the foundation for a future grants program?	

15.2 Cost Evaluation

CEPF will consider each cost proposal in relation to the level of quality and output suggested in the technical proposal. Cost proposals will thus be considered in terms of their realism and the items below but will not be given a numeric score. CEPF will select the applicant which presents the best value for the required product and services.

Proposal Cost Evaluation Scorecard

4	Budget
4.1	Is the budget within the limit named in Item 6?
4.2	Are all costs mathematically justified through the clear presentation of unit costs, total units, and total costs?
4.3	Are all unit costs, total units, and total costs appropriate in relation to the proposed technical and managerial activities?
4.4	Are proposed unit rates in accord with market rates in the region?
4.5	If the applicant claims indirect costs, does it clearly show the base of application and is this distinct from any previously enumerated direct costs; does the applicant provide an explanation of how the indirect cost rate has been determined (e.g., historical averages, audited financial statements, precedent contracts); and does the applicant provide supporting documentation with its financial questionnaire?
4.6	Does the budget relate clearly and directly to the proposal?
4.7	Are the costs budgeted for stakeholder consultations sufficient and realistic?
4.8	Are all macroeconomic assumptions affecting the budget reasonable and justified, such as foreign exchange rates and inflation?

Attachments

1. Budget template

END OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS