



## Call for Proposals

### Update of the Ecosystem Profile for the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot

**Opening date:** 3 February 2025

**Closing date:** 10 March 2025

#### 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 East Melanesian Islands (EMI) 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](mailto:cepf@cepf.net) by the closing date listed above.

#### 2. Background

CEPF began making grants to CSOs in the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot in July 2013 with the aim of improving the management of 20 priority sites and to conserve 48 globally threatened species. This first investment phase ended in April 2022, and resulted in the award of 116 grants totaling \$8.5 million to 65 organizations.

CEPF grantees made important strides in advancing the hotspot's conservation. Grantees worked closely with local communities and governments to improve management of 20 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covering 1.2 million hectares of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems. CEPF grantees conducted field surveys and conservation actions to improve the conservation status of 54 globally threatened species.

The investment phase also focused on strengthening local CSO capacity for conservation and territorial management. Of the 32 organizations based in the hotspot that prepared a project baseline and final evaluation of the CEPF Civil Society Tracking Tool, 25 organizations (78 percent) showed an increase of at least 5 points, demonstrating improvement in their organizational capacity. CEPF support was instrumental in helping several East Melanesian organizations become leading conservation advocates in the hotspot. CEPF grants helped to establish and/or strengthen 48 multi-actor partnerships. Also, more than 7,000 people participated in conservation training, covering a broad cross section of topics.

While important strides were made, CEPF and its partners recognize that the hotspot remains in need of additional conservation attention to counteract significant conservation threats, stemming from unsustainable patterns of development and climate change. The EMI conservation community is in the best position to champion sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in the hotspot but capacity gaps remain a key limitation to long-term success. This challenge underlies the need for a new investment by CEPF, to support EMI civil society to play a key role in the hotspot's long-term conservation and sustainable development.

CEPF grant making in EMI was guided by an ecosystem profile, developed in 2012 through an extensive consultation process. The ecosystem profile set out a situational analysis, based upon a review of biodiversity priorities, threats, policy environment, civil society context and patterns of conservation investment, and presented a consensus-based investment strategy, with broad stakeholder buy-in. The process to prepare the [East Melanesian Island Hotspot Ecosystem Profile](#) was launched in December 2011 and ended in December 2012, when the CEPF Donor Council approved the profile and its investment strategy, permitting investment to proceed shortly thereafter.

More than 12 years have passed since the first ecosystem profile was approved. The hotspot's operating environment and conservation status have evolved significantly since then. Conservation threats and their social, economic and political drivers have changed. Additionally, the EMI conservation community has also evolved significantly, and new conservation investments have been made. There is a need, therefore, to update the ecosystem profile, so that a new phase of CEPF investment in the hotspot can address the highest conservation priorities, take advantage of emerging opportunities, align well with investments by other funders, and reflect the aspirations and priorities of the EMI conservation community.

CEPF expects the updated ecosystem profile to provide a snapshot of the hotspot in 2025, to describe the state of, and threats to, biodiversity and the capacity of civil society to engage as a partner in conservation. The updating process will aim to achieve several key objectives:

1. Secure broad-based agreement from EMI stakeholders on biological priorities for conservation.
2. Describe the main threats to biodiversity and their trends.
3. Provide an overview of civil society, their capacity to partner with CEPF, and their priorities from an organizational and technical perspective to contribute to the hotspot's conservation of biodiversity integrating gender considerations.
4. Define CEPF's investment strategy for a five-year period (2026-2031).

The results of this process will be presented in a document titled *Ecosystem Profile for the East Melanesian Islands Biodiversity Hotspot: 2025 Update*. CEPF places equal emphasis on the quality of the final product and on 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. CEPF intends to present the ecosystem profile update to its governing body (the Donor Council) in December 2025. Upon approving the profile update, the Donor Council will also approve a total amount to invest in the hotspot; 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: (i) globally threatened species; (ii) the sites that sustain them (i.e., KBAs); and (iii) 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 EMI 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 and sites for CEPF investment, based on the transparent application of a set of criteria.

## **2.2. Focus of the Profile**

The ecosystem profile focuses on parts of three countries in the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot, and should address the terrestrial, freshwater and coastal realms. CEPF expects applicants to propose a strategy of engagement and analysis that features some combination of in-person and in-depth consultations, virtual consultations, remote engagement and desk studies. Applicants should be clear in their proposals how, and to what degree, they will conduct stakeholder consultations, to seek a inclusion of women and youth.

## **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 update 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 1 April 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 EMI Hotspot, 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.

#### **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. Additional, technical advice will be provided by an Advisory Committee, constituted by the profiling team to provide independent, objective comment and critical input to the ecosystem profile updating process.

#### **9. Scope of Work**

##### **9.1. Ecosystem Profile – Detailed Document**

The 2012 ecosystem profile should be used as a starting point. Wherever text of the ecosystem profile 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 2012 should be incorporated where relevant. An exhaustive literature review is not expected. It is anticipated that Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 10 will be lightly edited, to incorporate new information and remove superfluous information, for greater brevity and readability. It is anticipated that Chapters 8, 9 and 11 to 14 will require more significant updates, to incorporate new information and the results of stakeholder consultations conducted during the ecosystem profiling exercise. A new chapter on lessons

learned from the previous CEPF investment should be incorporated. Also, the civil society chapter should include an assessment of the needs and opportunities for organizational development among the civil society community in the hotspot, to include attention to gender equity in project operations. This assessment will need to be reflected in the investment strategy as well. CEPF will provide further guidance on the scope and available tools related to organizational development during implementation of this agreement.

The ecosystem profile is composed essentially of two sections. The first section consists of Chapters 1 to 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, comprising Chapters 12 to 13 and the results framework. The second section focuses only on those species, sites, corridors and thematic approaches that are prioritized for CEPF investment.

The ecosystem profile update will be drafted in professionally edited English and adhere to the structure and chapter renumbering below.

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approximate Page Length*</b>
Executive Summary	3
Chapter 1. Introduction	2
Chapter 2. Background	4
Chapter 3. Lessons Learned from Previous CEPF Investment	5
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	10
Chapter 11. Assessment of Current Conservation Investment	15
Chapter 12. CEPF Investment Niche	2
Chapter 13. CEPF Investment Strategy and Programmatic Focus	20
Chapter 14. Results Framework	5
Chapter 15. Sustainability	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>
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 the previous phase of CEPF investment (2013 to 2022). This chapter should draw on the reports from the [2018 Mid-Term Assessment Report](#) and the [2022 Final Assessment Report](#), as well as the independent evaluation of lessons learned by the RIT, to be furnished by the CEPF Secretariat.

**Chapter 4. Biological Importance of the Hotspot.** This chapter describes the geographic, climatic and biological history of the hotspot, with a consideration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine 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 should summarize the 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.

**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 analysis on gender and on youth, considering the implications of gender and youth 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 reference 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 international alliances and influences that impact conservation and development.
3. Overview of trends in governance: decentralization; political conflicts; and security issues.
4. Overview of near-term policy initiatives affecting resource management in KBAs and corridors.
5. 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.
6. Overview of policies, regulations, and institutions related to conservation financing.

**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, women's and youth

groups, 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 efforts to strengthen CSOs or promote networking among them.
4. 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.
5. Do these organizations have effective organizational development practices or policies, or do they need support to develop or strengthen those?
6. Do these organizations have policies, experience and capacity to integrate considerations related to gender and youth into their operations and projects?

**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 current and 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 current policies and initiatives dedicated to climate adaptation. The chapter should provide recommendations based on relevant documents 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 and other relevant sectors (including climate change), 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 describe patterns of conservation investment but to analyze them, in terms of trends over time, geographic and thematic gaps, and effectiveness. This chapter will identify opportunities for cooperation and leverage to optimize CEPF grant making.

**Chapter 12. CEPF Investment Niche.** Based on the preceding description of the conservation outcomes and investment context, this chapter identifies how CEPF investment will build on the previous investment phase, to complement and form synergies with 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 EMI 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. The investment strategy should include priorities dedicated to strengthening the organizational and technical capacities of EMI civil society organizations to foster an inclusive, effective and resilient conservation community, with attention to gender and youth. 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 profile update process.

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.

**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 priority. Each indicator has a realistic target, commensurate with the amount of money allocated for grant making. The results framework will be developed in close coordination with the CEPF Secretariat.

**Chapter 15. Sustainability.** This chapter describes how CEPF investment during 2026 to 2031 will result in sustainable conservation results. The chapter may consider any relevant angle, including: how investments will lead to greater engagement and increased effectiveness of civil society in conservation; how investments strengthen the organizational and technical capacity of civil society; how investments change the availability of funding for civil society; how investments build broader constituencies of support for biodiversity situation; how investments create larger networks that catalyze action; and how investments can lead local civil society to transition away from CEPF support.

**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 species outcomes (i.e., globally threatened species) in the hotspot.
2. Table of site outcomes (i.e., KBAs) in the hotspot.
3. Table of conservation corridors in the hotspot.
4. Table of major current investments in biodiversity conservation in the hotspot.
5. Table of major current investments in nature-based solutions to climate change in the hotspot.

## 9.2. Technical Summary

The purpose of the Technical Summary is to make the key information and analysis in the ecosystem 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, 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. Recommendations on CEPF Management Approach**

Based on the findings of this consultancy and an assessment of the EMI institutional landscape, the profiling team will prepare an internal memo outlining its key recommendations for CEPF's management approach to facilitate effective grant making and organizational development for the second investment phase in the EMI Hotspot. The memo should include the following:

1. A recommended approach to organizational development of local CSOs that have a strategic role to play in the delivery of the conservation outcomes of the ecosystem profile, to enable effective CEPF grant making for the duration of the second investment phase and sustain the impacts into the long term.
2. A recommended approach for structuring the EMI Regional Implementation Team (RIT) and its staffing structure to fulfill its [Terms of Reference](#), taking into consideration the unique characteristics of the hotspot as it relates to grant making and CSO capacity. This section should identify potential organizations that could serve as the RIT, and include a brief analysis of the advantages and limitations of each organization associated with it assuming the role as the RIT.
3. Recommendations for the CEPF Secretariat to consider as it structures its management and staffing approach to grant making and organizational development in the hotspot.

### **9.4 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. Convene an Advisory Committee of experienced conservationists to provide guidance on methodologies for data collation and analysis, key data sources and literature, and approaches to stakeholder engagement (April 2025 and throughout the process).
3. Hold regular management meetings (virtual) of principal authors and contributors to the ecosystem profile (April to December 2025).
4. Organize 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 9, 11, 12 and 13. These consultations can be organized virtually or in person, and by country or by theme (April to August 2025).
5. Organize a regional meeting to build consensus around the investment strategy for the second phase (September 2025).
6. 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 (August to November 2025).

7. Present the draft ecosystem profile at a virtual meeting of the Working Group (November 2025).
8. 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 (December 2025).

Given the limited funds for this exercise and considering the challenges of engaging with stakeholders in some parts of the hotspot, 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, indigenous, gender, youth and private sector actors.

### **9.5. 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 9 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.

<b>Invoice</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Amount (USD)</b>
1	15-April-25	No deliverable / agreement signature	<i>\$td</i>
	14-May-25	1. Electronic announcement of the ecosystem profile process 2. List of key participant stakeholders and draft stakeholder analysis 3. Draft schedule of planned stakeholder consultations	
	31-May-25	4. Final schedule and agenda for all stakeholder consultations	
	30-June-25	5. Draft list of globally threatened species, KBAs and conservation corridors	
2	1-July-25	Invoice for period May-June 2025	<i>\$td</i>
	15-July-25	6. Draft chapter on conservation outcomes	

Invoice	Date	Deliverable	Amount (USD)
	31-August-25	7. Draft strategic directions and investment priorities 8. Draft results framework and numerical targets	
3	1-Sept-25	Invoice for period July-August 2025	<i>\$tbd</i>
	30-Sept-25	9. Full draft of ecosystem profile per SOW Item 9.1 (i.e., "Draft 1"), submitted for CEPF Secretariat review	
	15-Oct-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)	
	31-Oct-25	11. Revised ecosystem profile per CEPF Secretariat comments, in English (i.e., "Draft 2"), submitted for CEPF Working Group review	
4	1-Nov-25	Invoice for period September-October 2025	<i>\$tbd</i>
	10-Nov-25	12. 30-page technical summary 13. PowerPoint presentation for CEPF Working Group	
	30-Nov-25	14. Revised ecosystem profile addressing comments of Working Group (i.e., "Draft 3"), submitted for CEPF Donor Council review 15. Final contact list of all individuals consulted for the ecosystem profile (i.e., name, position, organization, telephone, electronic mail, geographic location) 16. GIS layer of conservation corridors	
	15-Dec-25	17. Memo - Recommendations on CEPF Management Approach for the Second Investment Phase in the EMI Hotspot	
5	31-Dec-25	Invoice for period November 2025	<i>\$tbd</i>
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$200,000</b>

## 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 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 East Melanesia; 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.

An expert in **conservation finance** 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 and organizational development approaches 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 and the Advisory Committee will use in evaluating proposals.

Proposals should be submitted electronically to [cepf@cepf.net](mailto: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 East Melanesia; and organizational history and mission statement.
2. Relevant experience in East Melanesia.
3. Experience managing multi-disciplinary efforts that are based on applied conservation science.
4. Experience facilitating stakeholder consultations.
5. Experience preparing programmatic design documents, including integration of gender considerations.

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 EMI 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 be taking 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 EMI Hotspot and expertise in applied conservation science, civil society strengthening, gender inclusion, 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. 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 a [financial questionnaire](#). The questionnaire itself requests further documentation about the 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**

<b>1</b>	<b>Organizational Experience</b>	<b>Points</b>
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 East Melanesian Islands Hotspot?	
1.4	Does the lead organization demonstrate experience managing programs of similar size, scale, and complexity as that of the ecosystem profiling team?	
<b>2</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Points</b>
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?	
<b>3</b>	<b>Proposed Technical Approach</b>	<b>Points</b>
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 East Melanesian Islands Hotspot?	20
3.2	Does the applicant demonstrate a clear understanding of civil society in East Melanesian Islands 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 with consideration to gender inclusivity, 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**



<b>4</b>	<b>Budget</b>
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**