

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
Terms of Reference  
Regional Implementation Team for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Staffing**

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

**Period of Performance**

The RIT engagement coincides with the duration of investment described in the ecosystem profile. In the case of the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot, the expected implementation period will be five years, from approximately July 2017 to July 2022. This being said, CEPF hopes to promulgate long-term visions for conservation in this hotspot. This long-term vision will establish goals that may take 20 years or more to accomplish. The appointed RIT for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot will be

engaged in this effort, updating the ecosystem profile and guiding its future implementation beyond the first period of investment.

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Component 1.** Coordinate CEPF investment in the hotspot

##### **Functions**

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

#### **Component 2.** Support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices

##### **Functions**

1. Support civil society to engage with government and the private sector and share their results, recommendations, and best practice models.
2. Engage directly with private sector partners and government officials and ensure their participation in implementation of key strategies.

#### **Component 3.** Communicate the CEPF investment throughout the hotspot

##### **Functions**

1. Communicate regularly with CEPF and partners about the portfolio through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, the internet (website and electronic newsletter) and reports to forums and structures.
2. Prepare a range of communications products to ensure that ecosystem profiles are accessible to grant applicants and other stakeholders.
3. Disseminate results via multiple and appropriate media.
4. Provide lessons learned and other information to the Secretariat to be communicated via the CEPF website.
5. Conduct exchange visits with other RITs to share lessons learnt and best practices.
6. In coordination with the CEPF Secretariat, ensure communication with local representatives of CEPF's donors.

#### **Component 4. Build the capacity of local civil society**

##### **Functions**

1. Undertake a capacity needs assessment for local civil society.
2. Support implementation of a long-term strategic vision for the hotspot geared toward enabling civil society to “graduate” from CEPF support.
3. Assist civil society groups in designing projects that contribute to the achievement of objectives specified in the ecosystem profile and a coherent portfolio of mutually supportive grants.
4. Build institutional capacity of grantees to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.
5. Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence government agencies.
6. Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence the private sector.

#### **Component 5. Establish and coordinate a process for large grant (>\$20,000) proposal solicitation and review**

##### **Functions**

1. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of applications.
2. Announce the availability of CEPF grants.
3. Publicize the contents of the ecosystem profile and information about the application process.
4. With the CEPF Secretariat, establish schedules for the consideration of proposals at pre-determined intervals, including decision dates.
5. Establish and coordinate a process for evaluation of applications.
6. Evaluate all Letters of Inquiry.
7. Facilitate technical review of applications (including, where appropriate, convening a panel of experts).
8. Obtain external reviews of all applications over \$250,000.
9. Decide jointly with the CEPF Secretariat on the award of all grant applications of more than \$20,000.
10. Communicate with applicants throughout the application process to ensure applicants are informed and fully understand the process.

#### **Component 6. Manage a program of small grants (≤\$20,000)**

##### **Functions**

1. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of small grant applications.
2. Announce the availability of CEPF small grants.
3. Conduct due diligence to ensure sub-grantee applicant eligibility and capacity to comply with CEPF funding terms.
4. Convene a panel of experts to evaluate proposals.
5. Decide on the award of all grant applications of \$20,000 or less.
6. Manage the contracting of these awards.
7. Manage disbursement of funds to grantees.
8. Ensure small grant compliance with CEPF funding terms.
9. Monitor, track, and document small grant technical and financial performance.
10. Assist the Secretariat in maintaining the accuracy of the CEPF grants management database.
11. Open a dedicated bank account in which the funding allocated by CEPF for small grants will be deposited, and report on the status of the account throughout the project.

12. Ensure that grantees complete regular (based on length of the project) technical and financial progress reports.
13. Prepare semi-annual summary report to the CEPF Secretariat with detailed information of the Small Grants Program, including names and contact information for all grantees, grant title or summary of grant, time period of grants, award amounts, disbursed amounts, and disbursement schedules.

**Component 7.** Monitor and evaluate the impact of CEPF's large and small grants

**Functions**

1. Collect and report on data for portfolio-level indicators (from large and small grantees) annually as these relate to the logical framework in the ecosystem profile.
2. Collect and report on relevant data in relation to CEPF graduation criteria for the hotspot.
3. Collect and report on relevant data for CEPF's global monitoring indicators.
4. Ensure quality of performance data submitted by large and small grantees.
5. Verify completion of products, deliverables, and short-term impacts by grantees, as described in their proposals.
6. Support grantees to comply with requirements for completion of tracking tools, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool.
7. In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a mid-term assessment and a final assessment of portfolio progress (covering large and small grants).
8. Conduct regular site visits to large and small grantees to monitor their progress and ensure outreach, verify compliance and support capacity building.
9. Provide guidance to grantees for the effective design and implementation of safeguard policies to ensure that these activities comply with the guidelines detailed in the CEPF Operations Manual and with the World Bank's environmental and social safeguard policies. Provide additional support and guidance during the implementation and evaluation cycles at regular field visits to projects.
10. In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a final assessment of portfolio progress and assist with preparation of report documentation.

**Component 8.** Lead the process to develop, over a three-month period, a long-term strategic vision for CEPF investment

**Functions**

1. Mobilize expertise and establish an advisory group to ensure that the long-term vision engages with appropriate stakeholders.
2. Undertake a review of relevant literature to ensure alignment of the long-term vision with other initiatives and avoid duplication of effort.
3. Consult with key stakeholders to solicit their input into the development of the long-term vision.
4. Synthesize the results of the literature review and stakeholder consultations into a long-term strategic vision document.
5. Present the draft long-term vision to key stakeholders and revise the document according to their comments.
6. Prepare a progress report for presentation to the CEPF donors' Working Group.

## **Component 9. Reporting**

### **Functions**

1. Participate in initial week of RIT training.
2. Participate in two “supervision missions” per year; each to include at least two days in the office and a visit to grantees in the field (approximately two weeks).
3. Prepare quarterly financial reports and six-monthly technical reports.
4. Respond to CEPF Secretariat requests for information, travel, hosting of donors and attendance at a range of events to promote CEPF.