

**Call for Letters of Inquiry nr 21**  
**Small Grants – restricted call\***  
**Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot**

- Eligible Countries:** Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine, Tunisia
- Opening Date:** Monday 25 July 2022
- Closing Date:** Monday 12 September 2022, 23.59 GMT
- Project Budget:** Maximum USD 20,000 per grant
- Project Timeframe:** Projects can start from 1 November 2022 at the earliest, and must be completed by 31 October 2023 (so they should be no longer than 12 months)

CEPF and BirdLife International, serving as [regional implementation team](#) (RIT) for the hotspot, are inviting proposals in the form of letters of inquiry (LOIs) for small grants from civil society organizations in the Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot.

\* **This call for proposals is restricted:** only current/former grantees (and their sub-grantees) under Phase 2 of the CEPF programme in the Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot (2017-2022) are eligible to apply. If you are not sure you are eligible, please contact [maaike.manten@birdlife.org](mailto:maaike.manten@birdlife.org) before you start writing your application.

Eligible applicants are advised to read this call for proposals document in full.

## BACKGROUND

The [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund \(CEPF\)](#) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank, with additional funding in the Mediterranean Basin provided by MAVA Foundation. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

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

The current CEPF investment phase in the Mediterranean hotspot, initially supposed to close in October 2022, will be extended to December 2023, thanks to additional funding provided by MAVA Foundation and CEPF Core Donors. This extension allows for a new round of grant-making in the hotspot, following the same investment strategy as described in the ecosystem profile referenced above.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This is a restricted call for proposals.

- All current/former grantees, and their sub-grantees\*, under Phase 2 of the CEPF programme in the Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot are eligible to apply. This includes all grantees, and their sub-

grantees, who received a small grant and/or a large grant **between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2022**.

- \* Sub-grantees are organizations which were responsible for specific deliverables within large grants, and that were *contracted* by the large grantee to produce this deliverable. This call will allow sub-grantees to apply for a CEPF small grant directly, to provide them with the opportunity to obtain additional financial support for their organizations and conservation work. Sub-grantees are encouraged to discuss their application with their large grantee partner before applying; large grantee partners are expected to mentor their sub-grantees in this process, if needed.
- Each grantee/sub-grantee can only submit one (1) Letter of Inquiry under this call for proposals. If the applicant organisation received more than one grant from CEPF between October 2017 and September 2022, they would need to select one of these grants, and build upon the activities implemented under the selected grant.
- Current grantees whose grants have already been extended beyond 30 September 2022, or who are in discussion with CEPF to extend their grants beyond 30 September 2022, are encouraged not to apply under this call for proposals.
- CEPF grantees under Phase 1 of the CEPF programme in the Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot (2012-2017), and civil society organisations in the Mediterranean hotspot that have not received funds from CEPF before, are *excluded* from this call.

If you are not sure if you are eligible, please contact Maaïke Manten, RIT Manager, at [maaïke.manten@birdlife.org](mailto:maaïke.manten@birdlife.org) before you start writing your application.

This call aims to support those CEPF grantees who are most at risk due to the closure of the MAVA programme in the region, and/or due to other external circumstances; as well as CEPF grantees who didn't secure funds to continue critical conservation activities initiated during the CEPF project. CEPF will prioritise support to organisations that can prove they are highly dependent on CEPF and/or MAVA funding.

In addition to a description of the project itself, and of the importance and urgency of the proposed conservation activities, applicants will need to clarify in their Letter of Inquiry:

- Which fundraising activities they are undertaking to keep their organisation operational
- Which other donors are supporting their organisation at this moment

## **ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES and SITES**

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

LOIs will be accepted for all five Strategic Directions (see table below).

### **Specific guidance for this call for proposals:**

- Proposed projects should be submitted **under the same Strategic Direction** and (where relevant) **at the same KBA(s)** as the previously funded CEPF grant. Proposed projects should **build on the results** of the project that has already been funded by CEPF.
  - o No 'new' projects and no projects at 'new' KBAs will be accepted under this call for proposals. *(If there is an imperative need to include a new KBA in your project, please contact [maaïke.manten@birdlife.org](mailto:maaïke.manten@birdlife.org) to discuss this before you apply.)*
  - o If you received multiple grants, under the same or different SDs, during Phase 2 of the programme, you will need to select one SD for your application under this call for proposals. Each grantee/sub-grantee can only submit *one application* under this call.
- Proposed projects should focus on **tangible conservation action**, consolidating positive impacts on biodiversity. Make sure your project activities will build on, and/or amplify, the conservation achievements you made during the previously funded CEPF grant.
- Each proposed project should include a component of **institutional capacity development**, based on the scores of the latest Civil Society Tracking Tool that was completed by the applicant

organisation. Examples could be: training in financial management, communications, legal affairs; production of an organisational strategic / fundraising plan; development of a policy for human resources and volunteers; development of a website... etc

**Table 1. Eligible Strategic Directions and Investment Priorities**

Strategic direction	Investment priorities
1: Support civil society to engage stakeholders in demonstrating integrated approaches for the preservation of <b>biodiversity in coastal areas</b> .	1.1: Engage local stakeholders in conservation actions that address threats to key elements of biodiversity in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.
	1.2: Engage private sector stakeholders to adopt sustainable practices that deliver positive impacts for conservation in priority KBAs in the coastal zone.
	1.3: Support civil society to engage with local or national governments to mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated coastal zone management, land-use and development planning processes.
2: Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened <b>freshwater biodiversity</b> .	2.1: Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services.
	2.2: Take action to reduce threats and improve management of selected sites in priority freshwater catchments with the participation of local stakeholders.
	2.3: Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority CMZs.
3: Promote the maintenance of traditional land use practices necessary for the conservation of Mediterranean biodiversity in priority corridors of <b>high cultural and biodiversity value</b> .	3.1: Support local communities to increase the benefit they receive from maintaining and enhancing traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use and agricultural practices.
	3.2: Promote awareness of the value of traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices among local community and government decision makers, to secure their recognition and support.
	3.3: Encourage business actors in the trade chain to support and promote traditional, biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.
4: Strengthen the engagement of civil society to support the <b>conservation of plants</b> that are critically endangered or have highly restricted ranges.	4.1: Increase knowledge and skills to support assessment and planning for the conservation of plants, and foster the emergence of a new generation of young professionals in plant conservation.
	4.2: Support integration of plant conservation into the management of protected areas.
	4.3: Support innovative actions for the conservation of important populations of plants, working with land owners and managers.
5: Strengthen the <b>regional conservation community</b> through the sharing of best practices and knowledge among grantees across the hotspot.	5.1: Support regional and thematically-focused learning processes for CSOs and stakeholders.
	5.2: Support grantees to understand and engage with international conventions and processes.

Grants cannot be used for:

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

Proposed activities should observe all other relevant safeguard and social policies as set out on the [CEPF website](#). The full Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is available [here](#).

## COVID-19

COVID-19 is still having a serious impact on organisations, projects and beneficiaries. Please include COVID-19-related considerations in your project description in the LOI, where relevant.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications (LOIs) must be written in **English, French or Arabic**. Please **download the LOI form** in [English](#), [French](#) or [Arabic](#). If you need support in other languages (Portuguese, Serbo-Croat, Albanian), please feel free to contact [maaike.manten@birdlife.org](mailto:maaike.manten@birdlife.org).

Applicants must submit their letter of inquiry by the deadline to [CEPF-MED-RIT@birdlife.org](mailto:CEPF-MED-RIT@birdlife.org). You will receive an acknowledgement from the RIT confirming your submission.

The LOI review will take approximately four weeks from the deadline date. The review committee will select the strongest LOIs which meet the eligibility criteria in the sections above. All applicants will receive a response from the RIT following the review of their project. Applications that have been accepted will be moved to the second stage and asked to elaborate their LOI with a more detailed budget and logframe. Final approved LOIs will be awarded a small grant, with an agreement made between BirdLife International, as the RIT for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, and the applicant's institution (the "grantee"). Grants will be denominated in United States dollars and grant agreements will be in English.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

All applicants are advised to review the CEPF Investment Strategy for the Mediterranean Basin in the ecosystem profile ([English](#) PDF – 16 MB) or the Technical Summary in [English](#) (PDF – 2.2 MB), [French](#) (PDF – 5 MB) or [Arabic](#) (PDF – 2.7 MB).

CEPF is committed to integrating gender into its portfolio. Applicants should design projects and write proposals that consider gender issues in the achievement of their conservation impacts. CEPF has developed several resources that can help applicants to design, implement and evaluate gender-aware projects ([CEPF Gender Toolkit](#), PDF – 359 KB) and understand what CEPF seeks in a proposal ([CEPF Gender Fact Sheet](#), PDF – 352 KB). Visit the [CEPF and Gender webpage](#) to learn more about how CEPF addresses gender in the projects it supports. The integration of gender in your project will be a factor in evaluation.

*Other helpful resources:*

- [Safeguard Policies](#)
- [12 Tips for Getting Your Grant Idea Funded](#)
- [CEPF training videos](#)
- [CEPF Project Database](#)

## CONTACT

The Regional Implementation Team will organise two **information webinars** about this call for proposals on **Monday 8 August 2022**:

- In English: 1pm – 2pm GMT+2 (CEST). Please use the Zoom link [here](#)
- In French and Arabic: 3pm – 4pm GMT+2 (CEST). Please use the Zoom link [here](#)

Recordings of these webinars will be made available afterwards.

If you have any questions about this call for proposals, please contact the Regional Implementation Team leader [maaike.manten@birdlife.org](mailto:maaike.manten@birdlife.org). Questions will be accepted and responded to until **Monday 29 August 2022**.