

## Call for Letters of Inquiry nr 22 Small Grants Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

- Eligible Countries:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine, Tunisia
- Opening Date:** Tuesday 21 February 2023
- Closing Date:** Tuesday 28 March 2023, 23.59 GMT
- Project Budget:** Maximum USD 50,000 per grant
- Project Timeframe:** Projects can start from 1 June 2023 at the earliest, and must be completed by 31 October 2024 (so they should be no longer than 17 months)

CEPF and the Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems (DIMFE), are inviting proposals in the form of letters of inquiry (LOIs) from civil society organizations in the Mediterranean biodiversity hotspot.

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

### BACKGROUND

The present Call for Proposals is launched in partnership with DIMFE, and as such successful applicants will be requested to ensure visibility of CEPF and DIMFE in their communication.

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 support in the Mediterranean Basin from the MAVA Foundation and the Audemars-Watkins Foundation. The regional implementation team (RIT) in the Mediterranean Basin is operated by BirdLife International.

The [Donors' Initiative for Mediterranean Freshwater Ecosystems \(DIMFE\)](#), is a partnership between donors. Created in 2021 by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, MAVA Foundation, and Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation, DIMFE aims to protect, conserve and restore freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean basin through the support of projects with a strong and direct impact in the field.

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, has been extended, thanks to additional funding provided by multiple donors. This extension allows for new grant-making in the hotspot, following the same investment strategy as described in the ecosystem profile referenced above.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Non-governmental organizations, community groups, universities, scientific institutions and private sector enterprises (engaged in the ecological transition and with less than 20 employees), may apply for funding. Individuals must work with civil society organizations to develop applications rather than apply directly.

Organizations must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions.

Government-owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can demonstrate that the enterprise or institution has:

- a legal personality independent of any government agency or actor;
- the authority to apply for and receive private funds; and
- may not assert a claim of sovereign immunity.

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.

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

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

LOIs will only be accepted for the following Strategic Direction:

- **Strategic Direction 2:** “Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity”.

Project proposals should be built on biodiversity conservation as a fundamental component and should demonstrate positive impacts on the conservation status of biodiversity.

Where relevant, applicants are encouraged to submit LOIs which harmonize with existing national or regional initiatives. Synergies with other organizations are also eligible, with one lead organization submitting the application, and project partners with clear roles stated in the LOI.

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

Strategic direction	Investment priority / focal areas
<b>Strategic Direction 2:</b> Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity.	<b>Investment Priority 2.1:</b> Enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services.
	<b>Investment Priority 2.2:</b> Take action to reduce threats and improve management of selected sites (KBAs) in catchment management zones (CMZs) with the participation of local stakeholders (these actions could imply restoration of freshwater ecosystems).
	<b>Investment Priority 2.3</b> Engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in catchment management zones (CMZs).

Applicants should observe the list of ineligible activities provided [here](#) and should comply with all 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.

## Timeline

Projects can start from 1 June 2023 at the earliest and must be completed by 31 October 2024 at the latest (so they should be no longer than 17 months).

## ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Palestine, and Tunisia.

## ELIGIBLE SITES

All Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Catchment Management Zones (CMZs) in the Mediterranean hotspot are eligible under this call for proposals, in conjunction with what is stated under 'Eligible Species' below.

- Download the map with all KBAs and CMZs [here](#) (PDF, 42.7 MB)
- Use the ArcGIS KBA app for the Mediterranean hotspot [here](#) (no additional software required)

## ELIGIBLE SPECIES

Please make sure that your project benefits the following species:

- Globally or regionally threatened freshwater species, specifically those species which are listed as EX, EW, CR, EN, or VU on the [Global IUCN Red List](#) or on a relevant Regional Red List ([European](#), [Mediterranean](#)).
  - o Species that are listed as threatened on national Red Lists are only eligible if they are also listed on the Global or a Regional Red List
  - o Note that Data Deficient (DD) and Not Evaluated (NE) species can be considered if you apply under Investment priority 2.1.
- Species have to be associated with IUCN Habitats 5 category - Wetlands (inland).

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications (LOIs) must be written in **English** or **French**. Please **download the LOI form** in [English](#), [French](#). *Please note that this is a revised LOI form, specific for this call for proposals, so please don't use an LOI form you used for a previous application.* If you need support in other languages (Arabic, 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 (composed by CEPF and DIMFE) 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

1. The regional implementation team will organise an **information webinar** about this call for proposals on **Thursday 9 March 2023 at 12 noon CET** in English and French (with support available in Arabic, Portuguese, Serbo-Croat and Albanian). Please use this [Zoom link](#).

*The recording of this webinar will be made available afterwards.*

2. Before applying, applicants are encouraged to discuss project ideas and eligibility with the Program Officer for their region, as follows:
  - a. Balkan: Vedran Lucic at [vedran.lucic@dopps.si](mailto:vedran.lucic@dopps.si) and/or Marijana Demajo at [marijana.demajo@pticesrbije.rs](mailto:marijana.demajo@pticesrbije.rs)
  - b. Middle East: Salwa El Halawani at [salwa.elhalawani@birdlife.org](mailto:salwa.elhalawani@birdlife.org)
  - c. North Africa: Awatef Abiadh at [abiadhawatef@gmail.com](mailto:abiadhawatef@gmail.com)
  - d. Cabo Verde: Aurélien Garreau at [aurelien.garreau@live.fr](mailto:aurelien.garreau@live.fr)
3. If you have any general 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 **Tuesday 21 March 2023**.