

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council  
Virtual Meeting  
Wednesday 15 December 2021  
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)**

**Partnership Highlights**

**Global Donors**

**L'Agence Française de Développement (AFD)**

The **US\$49.2 million** (US\$38 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and US\$11.2 million of co-financing) investment has started in the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Hotspot. The process to update the ecosystem profile for the hotspot, as a guide to grant-making under the GCF program, has begun. The call for expressions of interest for the regional implementation team (RIT) is out and closes on 15 December.

**Conservation International**

Conservation International has submitted a proposal to the Bezos Earth Fund for US\$20 million over two years for an investment in the Tropical Andes Hotspot and CEPF could receive US\$2 million.

**European Union**

Considering the structural changes that the EU has been implementing, the CEPF Executive Director met with members of the EU Regional Delegation Offices during his recent visit to Albania and North Macedonia.

**The GEF**

The CI GEF Agency has had discussions with the GEF Secretariat about GEF-8. More than likely, the Small Grant Program (SGP) will be opened to other delivery mechanisms. More will be known after the GEF Donor Meeting of February 2022. The candidature of CEPF as a new delivery mechanism for the SGP will be presented through CI-GEF.

**Government of Japan**

CEPF has re-engaged in dialogue with the Government of Japan through the Ministry of Finance now that Japan's last funding tranche of US\$15 million has been contracted in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot. The Government of Japan remains an important donor with its investment of US\$48,525,000 since CEPF's inception. It is important to recognize Yasushi Hibi, managing director of CI-Japan, who plays a key role in maintaining the relationship between CEPF and the Government of Japan.

## **World Bank**

On 1 July 2021, CEPF signed a US\$13.9 million contract with the World Bank (from the **US\$15 million** from the Government of Japan, which had been in the Japan Trust Fund of the World Bank since April 2015) for the Caribbean Islands Hotspot.

CSOs—including community-based groups, nongovernmental organizations, academia, and the private sector—from Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are eligible for the grants.

The new CEPF funding is to support efforts begun under the previous investment by replicating and scaling up good practice models that emerged from the earlier grants. Little of the current funding from other donors in the hotspot is earmarked specifically toward species conservation, so grants will also address this gap. The RIT, CANARI, was trained during the week of 8 November. The first call for proposals closed on 21 November. This call was only for the Dominican Republic and Jamaica; calls for other countries will follow soon.

## **Regional Donors**

### **KFW**

CEPF, CI's General Counsel's Office and KfW are meeting to finalize the financing agreements (**€7 million** in Ecuador) by the end of November. The hope is to have these contracts signed and a first tranche transferred by the end of 2021.

### **IKI (International Climate Initiative in Germany)**

CEPF had submitted a concept note in partnership with NABU (BirdLife partner in Germany—a powerful and influential NGO) for a total of €13 million over a period of seven years. The project proposed to amplify multiple innovative models for climate-conscious and biodiversity-friendly production involving local partners in four countries in the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). **Unfortunately, in a very competitive context, this concept note was not selected.**

### **Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP)**

CEPF submitted a concept note for **US\$2 million** at the end of November. This should be followed with the submission of a full proposal by the end of December. A review is expected in March and if approved, funds would be available on 1 July 2022. This project is for freshwater biodiversity conservation in the Indo-Burma Hotspot.

## **Prospects for Additional Funding**

### **Bezos Earth Fund**

The KBA Partnership has prepared a concept note, submitted by BirdLife. This concept focuses on supporting the definition and update of KBAs over the next two years in the Andes and Congo, priority regions to underpin 30x30 (protecting 30% of land and seas by 2030). The concept proposes US\$6.5 million for both regions.

### **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

CEPF, in partnership with the IUCN Asia Regional Office based in Bangkok, is planning to submit a concept to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The concept note is currently under refinement by two external consultants who specialize in GCF and Indo-Burma. The proposed GCF program aims to enhance communities' resilience to climate change by restoring and managing the most vulnerable wetlands so that they continue acting as effective nature-based solutions for drought management, mitigating flood risks and safeguarding food security. This will be achieved through support to civil society organizations working with local communities and to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as enhancement of wetland-related policy and planning. AFD will be the GCF Accredited Entity. This concept is for **€60 million** over 10 years.

CEPF, in partnership with BirdLife International, has developed a concept note for the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot (**€40-60 million** over 10 years) to strengthen ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in this hotspot. This is tentatively scheduled to be submitted by December 2021. It is hoped that AFD will act as the GCF Accredited Entity.

### **Private Foundations**

#### **Nimick Forbesway Foundation**

CEPF has received a four-year grant of **US\$200,000** from the Nimick Forbesway Foundation to be invested in the Wallacea Hotspot for terrestrial biodiversity conservation.

#### **Arcadia**

CEPF has presented its program to the UK-based Arcadia Fund, which is not interested in entering into a collaboration at this time, but leaves the door open for future partnership.

### **Other Partnership Highlights**

#### **2020 Hotspot Heroes and the IUCN World Conservation Congress**

CEPF honored its 2020 Hotspot Heroes with a [virtual celebration](#) on 21 October. The celebration was hosted by CI Senior Vice President for Field Partnerships Kelvin Alie, and included recorded interviews with the 10 grantees, video tributes to their work, and remarks from GEF CEO and Chairperson Carlos Manuel Rodriguez and CEPF's Executive Director. CEPF thanks all who participated, watched and shared the event with others. The celebration provided great examples of the achievements of CEPF grantees. We will continue to use the videos produced for the event in CEPF's social media.

CEPF had originally planned to celebrate the heroes in person at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) that had been scheduled for June 2020 in Marseille, but COVID-19 had other ideas. Once the WCC was rescheduled to September 2021, CEPF provided the heroes with registrations for the congress. Most of the 10 heroes chose to participate virtually, but for the few who wanted to participate in person and were able

to get vaccinated, CEPF made arrangements for their attendance and the CEPF Executive Director was able to spend time with them on site.

### **Asian Development Bank**

The CEPF Executive Director and Jack Tordoff, CEPF Managing Director, have been invited to attend the Asian Development Bank Regional Flyway Initiative (RFI) Inception Workshop that will be held 6–7 December. RFI aims to mobilize large-scale financing and international support to enhance the sustainable management of priority wetlands in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) while leveraging their co-benefits for coastal communities.

### **Learning Products**

As part of the GEF-funded project, **“Effectively mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into government policy and private sector practice: piloting sustainability models to take the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to scale,”** CEPF has produced five innovative knowledge products, and a sixth is in its final stages.

The products produced to date are: (i) a [guide](#) and [video](#) about establishing community-managed fish conservation zones based on CEPF grantees’ experience from Indo-Burma; (ii) a [masterclass for CEPF applicants](#) that provides detailed instruction on project design, monitoring and evaluation, safeguards, procurement and other issues, based on experience from the Eastern Afrotropical Hotspot; (iii) a [web portal](#) focusing on conservation of bustards, based on experience from the Indo-Burma Hotspot; (iv) a manual providing guidance to replicate strategies for uptake of sustainable practices, called “Solutions Worth Sharing,” based on experience from the Eastern Afrotropical Hotspot, and (v) a training presentation on how to empower women in conservation, based on experiences from Indo-Burma. The sixth product, a video and guidebook, focuses on documenting best practices in the Cerrado Hotspot for mapping lands occupied by “invisible communities,”—traditional, low-profile communities that often lack clear title to their land. Several of these products are available in multiple languages.

### **Improvements to ConservationGrants**

Over the past six months the ConservationGrants team has made numerous minor changes to the system. These are due to requests to make the system more efficient, and to reduce the possibility of error in data entry. An example of a new functionality is that we can now allow variation in the timing of programmatic reports (previously, these were automatically set for January and July). The benefit of this change is that the CEPF grant directors can schedule their workload more evenly throughout the year and avoid bottlenecks in reviewing reports and releasing payments to grantees. We have also focused on cleaning up the accounts, where an organization might have multiple entries due to names spelled differently or entry of a field office as separate from headquarters. These examples complicate our datasets for measuring capacity and gender awareness. Overall, the system is working very well and, at least from a monitoring perspective, is making our ability to report on results much easier.

### **Evaluations Since the Last Donor Council**

Two hotspot investments are approaching the end of their current phases.

Consequently, both regional implementation teams (RITs) for these hotspots are subject to an evaluation of their performance and lessons learned during the investment. The purpose of the evaluation is to capture lessons learned in relation to the RIT for the hotspot by considering the performance of the RIT in relation to the geography of the hotspot, the capacity of civil society there, the budget allocated to the RIT, and its achievement of individual deliverables as defined in its grant agreement with CEPF. For a hotspot where funds have been secured for the next phase of investment, the evaluation also provides guidance pertaining to selection of the organization that will perform the role of the RIT in the next phase. The evaluation of the East Melanesian Islands RIT, IUCN, started on 1 October and final reports are due 15 December. This evaluation is being conducted by EcoAdvisors. The second evaluation is being conducted by Emerald Network, and will focus on Tany Meva, the RIT of the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Hotspot. This evaluation started on 1 October, and final reports will be delivered during the last week of January.