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The Kangchenjunga massif with pines in the foreground, Sikkim, India



Red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*)

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CRITICAL | **ECOSYSTEM**
PARTNERSHIP FUND
EASTERN HIMALAYAS



Sophu lake, Jigme Dorji National Park, Bhutan

Safeguarding areas at risk

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) brings together several large donors – Conservation International (CI), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank – for conservation in biodiversity hotspots around the world.

The Eastern Himalayas region

The Eastern Himalayas region spreading over Bhutan, northeastern India, and southern, central, and eastern Nepal, is home to 175 known terrestrial mammal species and over 500 bird species. This area is threatened by incessant collection of forest products, harvest of trees for fuel, fodder and lumber, and conversion of forests to agricultural land leading to habitat loss.

\$5 million investment

In the Eastern Himalayas region, WWF leads a regional team responsible for facilitating, coordinating and monitoring grants for CEPF-supported conservation projects.

Every year, non-governmental organizations, community groups, academia and other civil society organizations will be invited to present letters of inquiry for specific projects. Funding support will be provided through both large and small grants.



Snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*)

CEPF in the Eastern Himalayas

In partnership with WWF, CEPF aims to strengthen the role of nongovernmental groups, local communities and other sectors of civil society in biodiversity conservation and landscape restoration in the region. To achieve this aim, land management techniques to link existing protected areas and create reserve networks will be encouraged.

CEPF's strategy in the region is underpinned by conservation outcomes — targets against which the success of investment can be measured. These targets are defined at three levels: species (extinctions avoided), sites (areas protected), and landscapes (biodiversity conservation corridors created). As a result, CEPF investments in the Eastern Himalayas Region focus on 76 globally threatened species mostly found in 60 sites within five conservation landscapes.

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Funding priorities

CEPF investments in this region focus on 76 globally threatened species mostly found in 60 sites within five conservation landscapes — the Terai Arc Landscape in Nepal, the Kangchenjunga-Singalila Complex in eastern Nepal, Sikkim and Darjeeling in India, the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex, the Kaziranga-Karbi Anlong and North Bank landscapes in northeast India.

While all five areas are eligible for support, emphasis will be on the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex, Kangchenjunga-Singalila Complex and the North Bank Landscape, to build momentum in these less-funded areas. In the other two landscapes, support will be available for targeted and strategic activities to maximize and complement existing funding.

Grants larger than USD 20,000 will be awarded to civil society groups that incorporate the following priorities in their proposals:

- Engaging civil society in developing and implementing management plans in key habitats
- Targeted conservation education and awareness programs among communities, schools, journalists and decision-makers in priority corridors
- Forest management practices that benefit biodiversity conservation in the priority corridors
- Targeted efforts to manage, protect and monitor key biodiversity areas

- Supporting effective, ongoing alternative livelihood projects with local communities to ease the pressure on priority areas
- Supporting traditional land- and resource-use practices in priority sites
- Strengthening and supporting government and civil society partnerships that result in new funding for achieving conservation outcomes
- Training programs to protect, manage and monitor species, sites and corridors
- Developing and strengthening capacity among grassroots civil society organizations to manage, monitor, and mitigate threats to biodiversity.
- Transboundary initiatives for conservation of wide-ranging species that require collaboration across international borders

Grants of less than USD 20,000 will be provided for:

- High-impact projects to conserve critically endangered and endemic species and other species-focused activities, such as research and monitoring for priority species.
- Projects that help meet any of the investment priorities identified above.



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Erythrina spp., Sikkim, India

People from Sakteng Community, Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhutan



Process

Based on letters of inquiry, decisions and awards of less than USD 20,000 will be made directly by the Regional Implementation Team in each of the three countries. For grants of more than USD 20,000, national committees made up of experts in Bhutan, India and Nepal, along with the regional team and the grant review committee based at the CEPF Secretariat and WWF-US will evaluate letters of inquiry. Organizations submitting promising projects will be invited to develop full proposals. These will be further evaluated to make final funding decisions.



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Rhododendron maddenii, a threatened species found in Sikkim, India

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