

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
42nd Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council
Virtual Meeting
Thursday 15 February 2024
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Brussels and Paris Time
10:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m. (+1 day) Tokyo Time**

Strategic Use of the US\$15.1 Million Catalyzed from the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation and Possible Role of the Foundation in the Governance of CEPF

Recommended Action Item:

The Donor Council is requested to provide an opinion on the possible role of the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation in the governance of CEPF.

Background:

In December 2023, CEPF was informed that the proposal to “Conserve two biodiversity hotspots (Mediterranean Basin and Guinean Forest of West Africa) by engaging and supporting organizational development of Civil Society”, submitted to the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation for an amount of US\$15.1 million, had been approved. The contract was signed on 18 January 2024.

The Hans Wilsdorf Foundation provided US\$5.75 million to CEPF for investment in the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot to:

- Update the ecosystem profile, revise the investment strategy and prepare a transformative third phase of CEPF, with a strong focus on capacity development, during 2024.
- Sustain support to ongoing initiatives by civil society organization (CSO) partners in 2024, to prevent loss of momentum for conservation actions or loss of capacity by key CSOs.
- Ensure continuous support to CSOs and involve them in the strategic process through an extension of the regional implementation team.
- Provide core funding to kickstart a new five-year investment phase (2025–2030), which would leverage additional funding from other donors.

The foundation also provided US\$6.25 million to CEPF for investment in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot to:

- Update the ecosystem profile to provide an investment strategy for five years, with broad stakeholder buy-in.
- Re-launch the small grant mechanism to support conservation actions by local and grassroots CSOs that build on the results of the previous phase, with a focus on quick wins.
- Provide core funding towards a new five-year investment phase (2025-2030), which would be matched by contributions from other donors.

Finally, the foundation provided US\$3.1 million to CEPF to develop and then implement a five-year strategy for a new approach to civil society organizational development.

The rules governing participation of CEPF donor partners in the governance of the fund are set out in section OM5.4 of the Operational Manual. The criteria for membership of the Donor Council include that:

“Global donors must contribute at least USD \$5 million (“Qualifying Contribution”) during the Term of the respective financing agreement with CI.”

This criterion (and all others) are met by the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation. Therefore, subject to the foundation accepting, the Donor Council could decide to invite the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation to join the partnership as a global donor. Alternatively, the Donor Council could invite representatives of the foundation to participate in Donor Council meetings as guests.