

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
44th Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council  
In-Person, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and Virtual Meeting  
Tuesday 11 February 2025  
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Santo Domingo Local Time  
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Brussels and Paris Time  
9:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m. (+1 day) Tokyo Time**

**CEPF Secretariat Staffing Analysis**

**Recommended Action Item:**

The Donor Council is asked to review the document and provide comment.

**Background:**

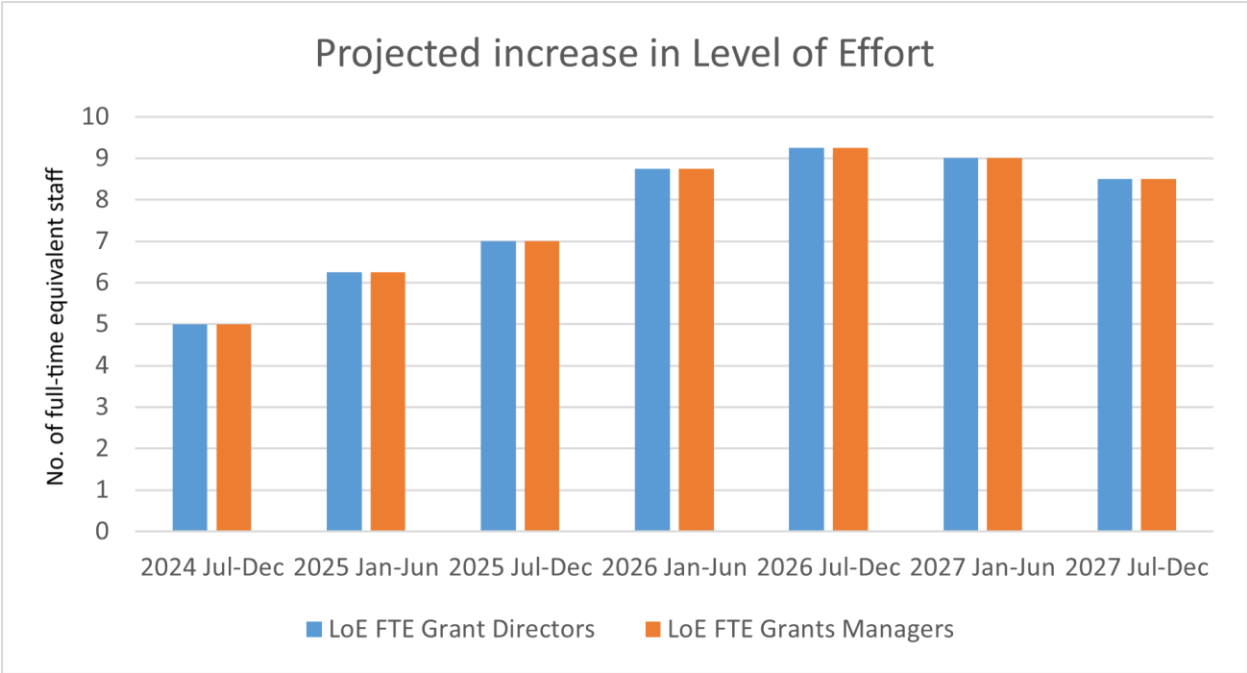
The size of the CEPF program, whether measured in terms of size of the grant portfolio, number of active hotspots or volume of grants awarded, has remained relatively constant over the last decade. Each year between FY15 and FY19, CEPF awarded, on average, 76 grants, for a total value of US\$15.4 million. Over the following five years, from FY20 to FY24, CEPF awarded, on average, 62 grants, totaling US\$13 million, per year. The number of grants awarded each year varied between 49 in FY22 (a year heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) and 89 in FY16, while the value of grants per year varied between US\$9.8 million in FY19 and \$17.7 million in FY18.

Despite some year-on-year variation in the volume of grant-making, the size of the global grant portfolio and, thus, the overall workload for the CEPF Secretariat remained relatively constant over the last decade. As such, the size of the CEPF Secretariat did not vary much over this period, with between 15 and 17 staff at any given time. Given that headcount is the major contributor to CEPF's operational costs, those costs have remained at a competitive level since inception, making the fund attractive to donors and ensuring that the vast majority of funding raised can be deployed as grants to civil society organizations working in the biodiversity hotspots.

Following the success of fundraising efforts, the size of the CEPF global portfolio will grow significantly in FY25. According to the approved spending plan, there will be US\$27.2 million in new grants, requiring the award of 112 individual grants. At the mid-point of the year, CEPF is about halfway to these targets. This rapid growth in grant-making implies an increase in workload for the Secretariat. Already two new staff members have been hired, and a third has accepted a formal offer and will start work in

March 2025. These new hires will bring the total number of staff working for the CEPF Secretariat to 20.

Nevertheless, if fundraising efforts currently underway are successful, the size of the CEPF grant portfolio can be expected to increase further. The following chart shows the projected level of effort over the next three years, assuming that current fundraising efforts are successful and that there is no reduction in donor requirements that contribute significantly to workload. It can be seen from the chart that the level of effort will increase significantly from current levels, with implications for CEPF Secretariat staffing.



As of 1 January 2025, the CEPF Secretariat has the equivalent of 4.5 full-time grant directors and 4.5 grants managers. This is already below the anticipated level of effort required during the remainder of FY25. Moving into FY26 and FY27, the level of effort is projected to peak at 9.25 full-time grant directors and grants managers, before declining in FY28 (although this assumes that no additional funding is secured on top of opportunities already being pursued).

While the most direct impact of the projected increase in workload is on staffing needs in the Grants Team (grant directors) and the Grants and Contracts Unit (grants managers), there will also be a significant increase in workload for other teams at the Secretariat (Communications Team, Finance Team, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Outreach Unit). In particular, the Communications Team, whose two full-time staff are already working at full capacity, will need additional staff to maintain core functions, including content production, fundraising/donor support (presentations, Annual and Impact Report, donor-specific communication products) and website maintenance. While some communication functions could potentially be transferred to regional implementation teams, a strong core team is essential to maintain consistent brand identity and messaging while also meeting communications-related donor obligations.