Title

At the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju last week, BirdLife International, IUCN and EWNHS (BirdLife in Ethiopia) launched a new funding opportunity for conservation in the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot, and announced the first call for proposals.

The three organisations, which together were awarded the role of Regional Implementation Team (RIT), will coordinate a US$9.8 million investment by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), over the next five years.

Nina Marshall, Managing Director of CEPF, introduced the Fund. Leo Niskanen of IUCN, representing the RIT, presented the Ecosystem Profile, while CEPF Grant Director Pierre Carret presented the Fund's 5-year investment strategy.

The launch, which took place in the Protected Planet Pavilion, was attended by representatives from civil society organisations and governments – including Yenenhh Teka, Director, Wildlife Development and Protection Directorate of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority.

The investment aims to support civil society in applying innovative approaches to conservation in under-capacitated and underfunded protected areas, Key Biodiversity Areas and priority corridors.

Since 2000, CEPF has been leading the way in enabling civil society to participate in and influence the conservation of some of the world's most critical ecosystems. It is unique among funding mechanisms in focussing on high-priority biological areas, rather than political boundaries, and examines conservation threats on a landscape scale.

The Eastern Afromontane Hotspot stretches over a curving arc of widely scattered mountains from Saudi Arabia to Mozambique. It covers over 1 million square kilometres in 16 countries, and is home to globally important levels of biodiversity, including 1,300 known species of bird, of which 157 are endemic. It is also the stronghold of charismatic species like the Ethiopian Wolf *Canis simensis*—the world's rarest canid—and the Critically Endangered Mountain Gorilla *Gorilla beringei beringei*.

This first call for proposals will look for projects that aim to improve the protection and management of Key Biodiversity Areas throughout the hotspot. Further calls addressing other key strategic areas will be made throughout the 5-year period of the investment.

Further information on the opportunity, and how apply, can be found here.

Applications may be made until 19th October.

For enquiries, contact CEPF-EAM-RIT@birdlife.org

CEPF is a joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank.