

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

Call for Letters of Inquiry No. 4 Investment in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot

Request for Letters of Inquiry

- 1. Type of Grants:** Large grants only (>US\$50,000)
- 2. Opening Date:** Wednesday, 25 July 2018
- 3. Deadline:** Friday, 21 September 2018 (Midnight in Washington, D.C.)
- 4. Eligible Activities:** Strategic Direction 4 only

The scope of this call is limited to the types of activities described in **Strategic Direction 4** of the ecosystem profile: “Build the capacity of local civil society organizations, including Indigenous People’s, women’s and youth groups, to conserve and manage globally important biodiversity” with its associated investment priorities:

- Investment Priority 4.1 – Strengthen the capacity of local civil society organizations in financial, institutional and project management; organizational governance; and fundraising.
- Investment Priority 4.2 – Establish and strengthen women-led conservation and development organizations, associations and networks to foster gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing.
- Investment Priority 4.3 – Strengthen the communication capacity of local civil society organizations in support of their mission and build public awareness on the importance of conservation outcomes.

CEPF is looking for qualified applicants to submit a letter of inquiry (LOI) to **develop country-specific civil society organization capacity development programs**. These

country-specific programs should facilitate the emergence of local civil society organizations, ranging from national nongovernmental organization to community-based organizations, as agents of change and credible partners to government, private sector partners and donors.

The civil society organization capacity development programs should include mentorship that targets a minimum number of local civil society organizations (referred to as mentees) per country (see section 6 below). The mentees will be selected with the CEPF Secretariat and the Guinean Forests of West Africa Regional Implementation Team (RIT).

5. Eligible Applicants for This Call

Nongovernmental organizations and private enterprises with demonstrated experience in training, mentoring and/or networking for groups of local civil society organizations may apply for funding.

Applicants must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions.

Criteria for selection of applicants will be the following:

- Demonstrated experience (min. 5 years) as organizational development manager /capacity builder, including organizational assessment, strategic planning, leadership development, organizational change, capacity building in project design, fundraising, reporting and financial management, and/or multicultural organizational development.
- Demonstrated successful previous coaching/mentoring approach to organizational development/capacity building of civil society organizations.
- A local, established presence or strong local engagement (of at least 2 years) in the country(ies) of proposed actions.
- Knowledge of organizational development in non-profit/biodiversity conservation sector.
- Demonstrated ability to work at the intersections of gender in the context of organizational development and biodiversity conservation.
- Demonstrated ability to work at individual, group and institutional levels to build capacity for social change.
- Strong network of other providers and consultants advantageous.

The applicant's eligibility should be clearly established in the LOI based on the above criteria.

Applicants may submit their LOI as a consortium of partners. In this instance, one

leading organization should be identified, and the roles and added contributions of the different partners should be detailed.

Anyone who is uncertain of their eligibility to apply for CEPF funding under this call should contact the RIT at cepf-gfwa-rit@birdlife.org.

6. Eligible Countries, Maximum Budget and Estimated Number of Mentees

The call is open to all countries in the hotspot with the maximum eligible budget per country and estimated number of mentees as presented in the table below:

Country	Maximum budget	Estimated number of mentee civil society organizations to be targeted with budget
Guinea	US\$100,000	7-10
Sierra Leone	US\$100,000	7-10
Liberia	US\$200,000	10-15
Côte d'Ivoire	US\$100,000	7-10
Ghana	US\$100,000	7-10
Togo and Benin	US\$75,000	5
Equatorial Guinea	US\$75,000	2-5
São Tomé and Príncipe	US\$75,000	5-7
Nigeria	US\$200,000	10-15
Cameroon	US\$200,000	10-15

Applicants can submit a combined application covering several countries, demonstrating both the economy of scale and their presence and past experience in each of these countries.

7. Minimum Contents to Be Found in Each Application:

To be considered for funding, applications should address the different contents listed in this section.

Technical aspects:

a) Include a training component that refers (but is not limited to) to the points addressed in CEPF's investment priorities for Strategic Direction 4:

- Investment Priority 4.1 – Financial, institutional and project management, organizational governance, and fundraising;
- Investment Priority 4.2 - Gender equality in natural resource management and benefit sharing; and

- Investment Priority 4.3 – Communication capacity for biodiversity conservation.

b) Provide a specific coaching/mentoring program for mentees to support them with strategic planning, project design, proposal development and writing, fundraising, project implementation monitoring, reporting, financial management and organizational development whenever relevant in the scope of the CEPF's investment strategy and small grants mechanism.

c) Specify how many mentees will be covered for each of your proposed activities.

d) Specify the duration of each of your proposed activities.

e) Specify the language(s) in which your activities will be provided and demonstrate your skills in this/these language(s).

f) Include a plan to monitor and evaluate the proposed activities.

Financial aspects:

a) Provide details of budget lines per activity proposed.

b) Clearly specify what will be covered for mentees as part of your budget.

8. Project Timeframe

Projects are expected to start on **1 May 2019** at the latest and must be completed by **31 December 2020**.

9. Evaluation of Letters of Inquiry

Evaluation of LOIs shall be made according to the following guidelines:

- Criteria of eligibility for the applicant and the application (budget, maximum duration) are complied with;
- The organization/consortium has the demonstrated experience and local integration as listed in section 5;
- The proposed action includes aspects listed in section 7; and
- The LOI is convincing and CEPF's support to proposed activities is likely to be relevant for local organizational development and capacity for conservation.

10. Letter of Inquiry, Full Proposal and Award Process

Applicants are required to submit an LOI through the [ConservationGrants](#) electronic portal. CEPF will **not** accept LOIs by email or any other mechanism.

Applications are welcome in English, French, Portuguese or Spanish. Upon completion of your application, you will receive an email acknowledgement from the ConservationGrants system confirming that the submission has been received.

Applicants who do not have a ConservationGrants portal account will be required to register a new account. The link to create an account in ConservationGrants is [here](#). Questions regarding account creation or regarding the ConservationGrants application process should be emailed to conservationgrants@conservation.org.

The LOI review process will take approximately eight weeks from the deadline date. The review committee will select the strongest LOIs that meet the eligibility criteria in sections 4 to 8. All applicants will receive a response from CEPF following the review of their proposed project. Applicants whose LOIs receive a positive review will be invited to submit a full proposal through the ConservationGrants electronic portal. The full proposal review process can take three to five months with various correspondences and updates on the proposal.

Full proposals that receive a positive review will lead to the award of a grant between Conservation International, as the host of the CEPF Secretariat, and the applicant's institution (the "grantee"). Grants will be denominated in United States dollars and grant agreements will be in English.

11. Advisory Service and Contacts

All applicants are encouraged to discuss proposal ideas with the project officer in charge of the area where the project would be implemented:

- **Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire:** [François Phopho Kamanó](#)
- **Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon:** [Ruth Akagu](#)
- **Togo and Benin, São-Tomé and Príncipe, and Equatorial Guinea:** [Mariana Carvalho](#)

Based on experience from previous calls for proposals, discussing your proposal idea with us before submitting it will significantly increase your chances of success. The advisory service **will terminate on 15 September 2018**. Please send your questions to the RIT before that date.

Please direct any questions or concerns to: cepf-gfwa-rit@birdlife.org.

12. Reference Information

- [How to Apply](#)
- Ecosystem Profile:
 - [English](#) (PDF – 5.2 MB)
 - [French](#) (PDF – 5.2 MB)
- Ecosystem Profile Summary:
 - [English](#) (PDF – 1.1 MB)
 - [French](#) (PDF – 1.2 MB)
 - [Portuguese](#) (PDF – 1 MB)
 - [Spanish](#) (PDF – 1.3 MB)

Additional information is also available on the [RIT website](#).

13. General information

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is designed to safeguard Earth’s biologically richest and most threatened regions, known as biodiversity hotspots. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation. The CEPF is a joint initiative of l’Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International (CI), the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank.

The Guinean Forests Biodiversity Hotspot covers 621,705 square kilometers and can be divided into two sub-regions: the “Upper Guinean Forests” from Guinea in the west, through Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and, marginally, into Benin and the “Lower Guinean Forests,” from much of southern Nigeria, into south-west Cameroon, and São Tomé and Príncipe, and the offshore islands of Equatorial Guinea. The Guinean Forests support impressive levels of biodiversity, having high levels of species richness and endemism. It also faces many ongoing threats to biodiversity which have resulted in the loss of more than 85 percent of the native vegetation cover.

CEPF’s investment niche in the Guinean Forests is therefore to provide civil society organizations at grassroots, national and international levels with the tools, capacity and resources to establish and sustain multi- stakeholder partnerships that demonstrate models for sustainable, pro-poor growth and achieve priority conservation outcomes. CEPF’s niche for investment in the hotspot was formulated through a participatory process that engaged civil society, donor and governmental stakeholders throughout the region. The results of this process and the five-year (2016-2021) strategy that CEPF has identified for supporting biodiversity conservation in the region are outlined in the [ecosystem profile](#) (PDF – 5.2 MB).