



1 July 2015

**CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND**

Call for Letters of Inquiry, East Melanesian Islands Hotspot

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is designed to safeguard Earth's biologically richest and most threatened regions, known as biodiversity hotspots. CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in its role as the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for the East Melanesian Islands, and CEPF, invite Letters of Inquiry (LoIs) from community groups, non-government organisations, academic institutions, private companies and other civil society organisations for biodiversity conservation projects in the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot.

The East Melanesian Islands, which include Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands as well as the islands region of Papua New Guinea (PNG), qualify as a hotspot due to their high levels of plant and animal endemism, and accelerating levels of habitat loss. Chief threats to biodiversity include widespread commercial logging and mining, expansion of subsistence and plantation agriculture, human population increase, and impacts of invasive species, and climate change.

Natural habitats in the East Melanesian Islands include coral reefs, mangrove forests, freshwater swamp forests, lowland rainforests, seasonally dry forests and grasslands, and montane rainforests. In many places, natural habitats extend from mountain ridge to reef, although fragmented by agricultural conversion and logging in many places. These "ridge-to-reef" ecosystems are important for their resilience to the effects of climate change, and because they deliver a wide range of ecosystem services to human communities.

As well as being rich in biodiversity, the islands of the hotspot also hold exceptional cultural and linguistic diversity. Because many languages are spoken by only a few hundred people, they are disappearing quickly, leading to a rapid erosion of traditional knowledge and practice. This is highly significant in a region where most land and resources are under customary ownership, and local people are true stewards of biodiversity.

In July 2013, CEPF launched an eight-year investment phase in the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot, focusing on 20 priority sites spread across the three countries, and addressing threats to 48 priority species. The CEPF investment strategy will support biodiversity conservation in ways that deliver significant, meaningful benefits to local communities, while making a sustained contribution to the development of local, national and regional capacity for conservation.

This is the fourth call for proposals issued by IUCN and CEPF for the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot. This call covers the **Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the islands region of PNG**. The call is restricted to **Investment Priorities 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1 and 4.2** from the overall strategy in the ecosystem profile.

Strategic Direction 1. Empower local communities to protect and manage globally significant biodiversity at priority Key Biodiversity Areas under-served by current conservation efforts

IUCN and CEPF invite proposals that address one or more of the following investment priorities:

1.3 Support local communities to design and implement locally relevant conservation actions that respond to major threats at priority sites.

1.4 Demonstrate conservation incentives (eco-tourism, payments for ecosystem services, conservation agreements, etc.) at priority sites.

Strategic Direction 2. Integrate biodiversity conservation into local land-use and development planning

IUCN and CEPF invite proposals that address one or more of the following investment priorities:

- 2.1** Conduct participatory ownership and tenure mapping of resources within customary lands at priority sites.
- 2.2** Provide legal training and support to communities for effective enforcement of environmental protection regulations.
- 2.3** Explore partnerships with private companies to promote sustainable development through better environmental and social practices in key natural resources sectors.

Strategic Direction 3. Safeguard priority globally threatened species by addressing major threats and information gaps

IUCN and CEPF invite proposals that address one or more of the following investment priorities:

- 3.2** Develop, implement and monitor species recovery plans for species most at risk, where their status and distribution are known.
- 3.3** Introduce science-based harvest management of priority species important to local food security.

Strategic Direction 4. Increase local, national and regional capacity to conserve biodiversity through catalyzing civil society partnerships

IUCN and CEPF invite proposals that address one or more of the following investment priorities:

- 4.1** Strengthen the capacity of local and national civil society organizations in financial management, project management and organizational governance.
- 4.2** Provide core support for the development of civil society organizations into national and regional conservation leaders.

It is essential that applicants familiarise themselves with the investment strategy for the East Melanesian Islands Hotspot, which is contained within the ecosystem profile, available at http://www.cepf.net/SiteCollectionDocuments/east_melanesian_islands/EMI_ecosystem_profile.pdf (PDF 3.9MB).

Please note that preference will be given to projects that are the closest fit to the investment strategy and demonstrate a leading role for local civil society organizations. IUCN and CEPF particularly welcome applications from local and grassroots organizations (for example community groups, faith-based organizations and NGOs). Individuals are encouraged to work with civil society organisations to develop applications, rather than to apply directly. Anyone who is uncertain of their eligibility to apply for CEPF funding should contact the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org.

Grants cannot be used for: (i) purchase of land; (ii) removal or alteration of any physical cultural property (including those with archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious or unique natural values); (iii) relocation of people or any other form of involuntary resettlement; or (iv) capitalisation of trust funds. All activities must comply with CEPF's social and environmental safeguard policies, which can be found at http://www.cepf.net/grants/Pages/safeguard_policies.aspx

How to apply

CEPF supports biodiversity conservation through two types of grants: **large grants of over US\$20,000 and small grants of US\$20,000 or less**. All applicants must submit an Lol in English or French. The Lol template and application guidelines are available at <http://www.cepf.net/grants/apply/Pages/default.aspx>. Before submitting formal Lols, applicants are encouraged to discuss proposal ideas and eligibility with the RIT at cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org

Completed Lols for large grant projects over US\$20,000 should be sent as an e-mail attachment to cepfgiants@conservation.org. Receipt of the application will be acknowledged by e-mail, and it will be forwarded to the appropriate team member. Applicants will be contacted thereafter as to how to proceed. Questions or concerns during this process can be sent to cepfgiants@conservation.org

Completed Lols for small grant projects of US\$20,000 or less should be sent as an e-mail attachment to cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org. Receipt of the application will be acknowledged by e-mail, and it will be forwarded to the appropriate team member. Applicants will be contacted thereafter as to how to proceed. Questions or concerns during this process can be sent to cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org

The deadline for receipt of Lols is 17:30 (Washington, DC time) on Monday 31 August 2015.

Applicants are encouraged to submit Lols prior to the deadline, in order that review and processing of their applications can begin sooner.

Please note that hardcopy Lols are not acceptable.

Further information and assistance can be obtained from:

CEPF Regional Implementation Team, IUCN Oceania,
5, Ma'afu Street, Suva, Fiji

Email: cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org; Website: www.iucn.org/oceania

Tel: +679 331 9084; Fax: +679 310 0128