

Call for letters of inquiry for the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot (MADIO)

Small grants

- **Eligible countries:** Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles
- **Opening date:** Monday 28 July, 2025
- **Closing date:** Friday 29 August, 2025, 11.59pm (Madagascar time, GMT+3)
- **Grant size:** Small grant (USD 50,000 maximum)

Due to limited funding remaining on our current allocation for this investment phase, note that a very limited number of projects will be selected as part of this call.

The [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund \(CEPF\)](#) and its regional implementation team (RIT) for the Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot are accepting letters of inquiry (LOI) [from civil society organizations](#) for projects that promote ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) in response to climate change and that meet the eligible activities and geographies of this call for proposals.

For more information on CEPF investments in the hotspot, please consult :

- Ecosystem profile : [English](#) - [French](#)
- Ecosystem-based adaptation in the Indian Ocean: [English](#) - [French](#)

1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

a. Eligible applicants

Non-governmental organizations, community groups and associations, universities and research institutes, private companies and other civil society organizations are eligible to apply.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the CEPF website, in particular with the [Eligibility](#), [Before you apply](#) and [How to apply](#) sections. Potential applicants who are unsure of the eligibility of their organization or project concept are encouraged to contact RIT at cepfproposals@iucn.nl for clarification.

b. Eligible themes

☐ EXCLUSIVELY ELIGIBLE FOR MAURITIUS

Investment Priority 1.1: Implement EbA actions, including agroforestry, “climate smart agriculture”, eradication of IAS, restoration of degraded watersheds and coastal ecosystems (including wetlands, mangroves, reefs and seagrass beds), and promotion of sustainable management of coastal and terrestrial ecosystems

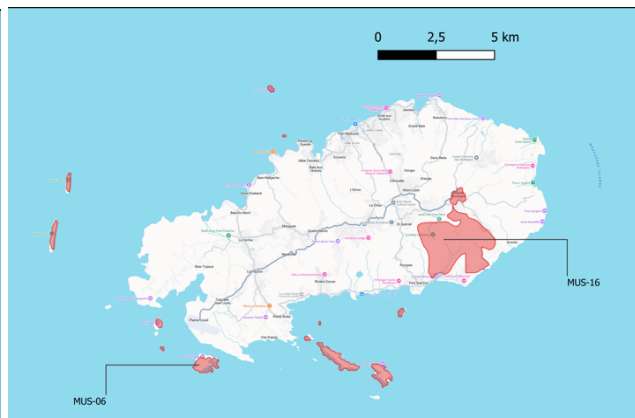
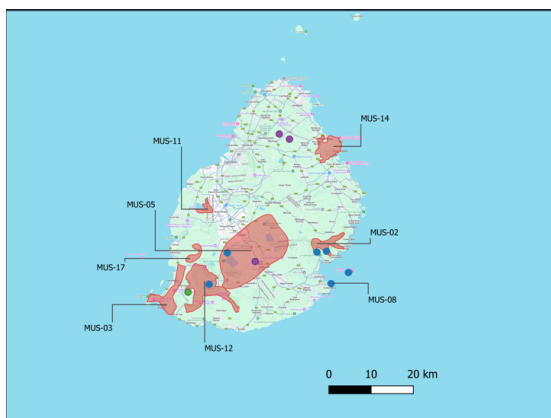
Eligible projects will be those that propose to design and implement EbA and nature-based solutions (NbS), as well as conservation actions that address climate impacts in priority KBAs. Activities will analyze the negative impacts of climate change on human livelihoods and propose EbA solutions that can sustain, conserve or restore species and natural areas in ways that help

regulate or reduce negative impacts. The solutions identified will then need to be planned on the basis of an understanding of their costs and strategies for covering these costs, both during the projects and beyond, to ensure the sustainability and continuity of EbA's new actions.

! ATTENTION:

- **Only projects focused on one or two of the following approaches will be considered eligible for this call:**
 - i. Developing and promoting "climate-resilient" diversified livelihood options: climate-smart agriculture, nature-based tourism, harvesting natural products.
 - ii. Promoting the control and eradication of invasive alien species.
- **Projects must bring contributions to one or more of the following CEPF targets:**
 - ✓ 16,500 women and 16,500 men with increased income as a result of ecosystem-based livelihood activities (sustainable fishing, nature-based tourism, harvesting natural products, etc.).
 - ✓ 1,000 hectares of small island ecosystems where invasive alien species have been eliminated or reduced.
- **Projects must take place in at least one of the 10 priority KBAs for CEPF investment in Mauritius listed below, but avoiding areas already covered by ongoing CEPF-funded projects.**

KBA code	KBA name
MUS-2	Bamboo Mountain Range
MUS-5	Relict Forests of the Central Plateau
MUS-14	Plaine des Roches - Bras d'Eau
MUS-12	Black River Gorges National Park and surrounding areas
MUS-3	Chamarel - Le Morne
MUS-8	Mauritius Island's South-Eastern Islets
MUS-16	South Slopes of Grande Montagne
MUS-17	Yemen-Takamaka
MUS-11	Corps de Garde Mountain
MUS-6	Rodrigues' Islets





- **Multi-KBA projects are eligible.**
- **Projects are eligible exclusively if the proposed activities impact the terrestrial part of the KBAs.**
- Activities in KBAs sometimes require **authorization from the owner/manager of the area**. In case an authorisation is needed with regards to your project, please ensure that you are duly authorized, or have taken the necessary steps to obtain the official authorisation before submitting the LOI.

To help you locate the 10 KBAs open for this call, an interactive map showing all the priority KBAs identified by CEPF in the hotspot is available [here](#).

☐ **ELIGIBLE FOR COMOROS, MADAGASCAR, MAURITIUS AND SEYCHELLES**

ATTENTION:

- **Projects must focus on only one of the Investment Priorities** listed below to be considered eligible.
- **Projects do not have to take place only within specific priority KBAs.** Any region within the four countries of the hotspot is eligible.

Investment priority 2.3: Support civil society in the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction measures

Climatic or health-related disasters are often devastating in the Indian Ocean islands. Early warning systems linked to agriculture, and enabling such events to be anticipated, are not always sufficiently effective. Eligible projects will be those that encourage the use and sharing of climatic information. Based on agro-meteorological bulletins produced by meteorological services and crop calendars also available by season and region, the aim is to promote rapid communication tailored to end-users, recognizing the different activities and capacities of farmers. To achieve this, media and extension methods should be mobilized to ensure that the results of these bulletins are used effectively by as many people as possible. The challenge is much more to systematize and perpetuate this sharing system, than to operationalize it. It is important, therefore, that the authorities take ownership of it, while seeking to ensure the sustainability of resources (human, financial, technical).

**Specificities for Comoros:**

Eligible projects will be those that take into account all of the following aspects:

- Strengthen early warning systems, adapted to the local realities of the Comoros;
- Facilitate the availability of useful climate data for farmers and rural communities;
- Provide solid, sustainable foundations to ensure that actions continue beyond funding;
- Promote close collaboration with local authorities, community platforms and other key players such as the Direction Technique de la Météorologie (DTM) and the Direction Générale de la Sécurité Civile (DGSC).

**Specificities for Madagascar:**

Priority will be given to projects that take into account all of the following aspects:

- Enhance the existence, dissemination and use of climate information from reliable sources for the benefit of local farming communities located near KBA;
- Strengthen existing Early Warning Systems adapted to the agricultural system through collaboration with disaster risk management/ reduction stakeholders;
- Promote and/or pilot innovative Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) actions using nature-based solutions, such as ECO-DRR in or around KBAs;
- Establish a means of sustaining the system(s) put in place;
- Are led by civil society organizations demonstrating experience in conducting disaster risk management/ reduction projects;

**Specificities for Mauritius:**

Eligible projects will be those that demonstrate prior experience in both:

- Conducting community-based vulnerability and capacity assessments (CVCAs) or comparable participatory risk assessment methodologies; and
- Delivering or facilitating Community Disaster Risk Preparedness Training (CDRT).

**Specificities for Seychelles:**

Eligible projects are those planning to implement one of the following actions:

- Community-led Disaster Preparedness and Early Warning Systems: Projects should empower local CSOs to establish community-specific early warning committees, develop tailored emergency response plans, and conduct regular evacuation drills. This ensures timely and effective dissemination of critical information to vulnerable households, enhancing their ability to respond to hazards.
- Capacity Building for Community and Local CSOs: Projects should enhance the capacity of community leaders and local community-based organizations (CBOs) in vulnerable coastal areas of Seychelles by focusing on providing comprehensive training and resources. This includes essential Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) skills such as first aid, psychosocial support, damage assessment, and the integration of traditional knowledge into modern disaster preparedness strategies. It also means improving their understanding, planning, and designing of EbA solutions specifically for coastal protection and DRR, integrating community-level action with resilience goals.

Eligible civil society organizations applying under this investment priority must demonstrate experience in disaster risk management/reduction.

For the four countries, priority will be given to projects that take into account the following aspects:

- Partnership/ collaboration with various actors, platforms or clusters from the public sector or other sectors,
- Clear plans for the continuation of the project after the proposed end date,
- Complementarity with existing projects and coordination or partnership with other organizations to avoid duplication,
- Involvement of local institutions,
- Significant impact on local communities, strengthening their resilience and capacity to protect biodiversity,
- Approval from relevant government authorities.

Investment Priority 3.3: Support the emergence of a new generation of conservation professionals and organizations specializing in biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and climate change by supporting, with small grants, technical and practical training and exchange visits

Eligible projects will be those that propose to support the emergence of a new generation of young professionals and consolidate and maintain a regional conservation community with the vision of including EbA into government and private sector actions over the long-term. The aim is to fill training gaps in the MADIO hotspot through training opportunities, including by supporting the development of short programs for young community leaders, development professionals and other relevant actors. Projects enabling young professionals from the hotspot to participate in training programs or exchange internships, including abroad, and aimed at strengthening adaptive capacity and reducing exposure to climate risks are eligible as long as the funds are not used for tuition fees or to undertake bachelors, masters or doctoral studies.



Specificities for Comoros:

Eligible projects will be those that take into account all of the following aspects:

- Set up sustainable EbA training and site visit exchange initiatives, more specifically to forest restoration and plant identification (botany), in collaboration with training schools, technical centers or the University of Comoros, for young professionals and students;
- Set up a structured system for monitoring learners, managing knowledge and evaluating achievements, ensuring accountability and continuity of learning;
- Support the creation or strengthening of a dynamic network of young professionals and students committed to EbA, community resilience and ecosystem conservation issues in Comoros.



Specificities for Madagascar:

Eligible projects will be those that take into account all of the following aspects:

- Develop and integrate sustainable short programs at training institutions, colleges or universities focusing on EbA and climate change for students and young professionals;
- Develop a system of accountability, knowledge management and learner follow-up in the program developed;
- Support or set up an active network of young professionals and students on the themes of EbA and climate change.

Entities wishing to become involved in this investment priority must demonstrate successful experience in supporting the development and running of training programs.



Specificities for Mauritius:

Priority will be given to projects that takes in account all of the following aspects:

- Include a comprehensive needs assessment aimed at identifying gaps and opportunities for the emergence of a new generation of conservation professionals and organizations;
- Demonstrate the applicant's experience in designing and delivering tailored training content for a future-ready talent pool based on identified capacity development needs;
- Propose targeted methodologies to strengthen the capabilities of next-generation professionals, enabling them to effectively apply technical and practical skills in their future professional settings.



Specificities for Seychelles:

Eligible projects are those planning to implement one of the following actions:

- Equip Young Professionals with EbA Expertise: Projects should aim to provide in-depth knowledge and practical skills in EbA to a new generation of young Seychellois professionals, including recent graduates, early-career conservationists, and aspiring community leaders. This will ensure they are well-equipped to contribute to climate change adaptation efforts.
- Develop Specialized Technical Skills for Watershed Management: Projects should focus on developing specialized technical skills among young Seychellois professionals in the restoration and sustainable management of critical watersheds. This training is crucial for enhancing water security and reducing flood risks through effective EbA techniques. This can include short, intensive courses on specific technical skills critical for climate change adaptation, such as ecological restoration techniques (reforestation of upper catchment, soil conservation or erosion control, wetland restoration, climate-smart agriculture).
- Develop innovation incubators that will support programmes for the development of new technologies, tools and approaches for biodiversity conservation, ecosystems services and climate change among young professionals.
- Create a collaboration between the academia, CSOs and government agencies to provide young conservationists with an opportunity to link their enhanced knowledge with on-the-ground nature-based solutions to climate change.

Entities wishing to become involved in this investment priority must demonstrate successful experience in developing and running training programs.

c. Eligible budget and timetable

The maximum amount for small grants is USD 50,000. Applications exceeding this amount will not be considered.

Future projects funded under this call for proposals are expected to start on January 1, 2026 and last until December 31, 2026 at the latest, i.e. a maximum duration of twelve (12) months.

In case the proposed project is part of a larger programme which runs beyond CEPF timelines and/or eligibility criteria, a distinction must be made in the application between what would be funded by CEPF and what would be funded by other donors. This will be used to establish the eligibility of the application.

d. Submission date

Letters of inquiry must be submitted no later than Friday August 29, 2025 at 11:59pm (Madagascar time, GMT+3). Applications submitted after the deadline will not be eligible.

e. Letter of inquiry templates and submission languages

Failure to comply with the templates of the letter of inquiry and budget will result in ineligibility of the application. Applicants are required to use only these templates and not to alter the files' format.

Applications for small grants may be submitted in **English** or **French**. Other languages will not be considered.

2. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Priority will be given to projects that:

- i. Demonstrate that the proposed activity addresses vulnerability based on a clear risk of climate change.
- ii. Adopt approaches that increase the resilience of ecosystems and communities to climate change.
- iii. Address priorities identified in the national climate change policy or strategy documents of the implementing country concerned.
- iv. Demonstrate positive gender impact.
- v. Demonstrate effective and efficient use of funds.
- vi. Demonstrate a clear strategy for achieving financial sustainability.

Grants cannot be used for:

- The use of child or forced labor.
- Construction or rehabilitation of large dams or complexes.
- The payment of salaries or wage supplements to government personnel.
- The purchase of firearms or other weapons.
- Activities that promote the trade or use of any substance listed in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, or other chemicals or hazardous materials subject to international bans, restrictions or elimination because of their high toxicity to living organisms, persistence in the environment, bioaccumulation potential, or potential depletion of the ozone layer.
- The purchase and use of pesticides that fall within World Health Organization classes IA and IB, or class II if they are likely to be used or accessed by non-specialized personnel, farmers or others without training, equipment and facilities to handle, store and apply these products correctly. ([English](#) - [French](#))
- The physical displacement and relocation of people (voluntary or involuntary).
- The purchase of land.
- Activities likely to have a negative impact on critical habitats.
- Activities that introduce or use potentially invasive non-native species.
- Removal or alteration of any tangible cultural heritage.

Before awarding a grant, the RIT will screen all projects against [CEPF's safeguard policies](#) to prevent any potential negative impact of projects on human populations and the environment.

CEPF will also assess projects on the basis of gender mainstreaming. CEPF has developed several resources that can (i) help applicants design, implement and evaluate gender-sensitive projects ([CEPF Gender Toolkit](#)) and (ii) understand what CEPF is looking for in a proposal ([CEPF gender factsheet](#)). Visit the [CEPF Gender webpage](#) to learn more about how CEPF addresses gender in the projects it supports.

3. HOW TO APPLY

Applications for small grants can be written in English or French. Please download the letter of inquiry and budget templates or fill in the online form directly (preferred).

Any changes to the letter of inquiry and budget templates will render the application ineligible. Applications must preferably be submitted by filling in the online form directly or, in case of poor Internet connection, as a Word document (for the letter of inquiry) and as an Excel sheet for the

budget to cepfproposals@iucn.nl no later than Friday 29 August, 2025, 11:59 pm (Madagascar time, GMT+3) indicating the following e-mail subject: LOI_2/2025/SG_CEPF_"COUNTRY"/"your organization".

For example: LOI_2/2025/SG_CEPF_MADA/IUCN NL

- English: [letter of inquiry template](#) and [budget template](#) / [Online form](#)
- French : [letter of inquiry template](#) and [budget template](#) / [Online form](#)

4. SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS

An information session will be held per country according to the following schedule and approach to inform all potential applicants and allow them to ask questions:

 **For Comoros** : in person in the three islands. **Grande Comore**: Thursday 31 July at ID office in Itsandra, starting at 10.00am (Comoros time). **Anjouan**: Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 August at ID office in Mirontsy starting at 10.00am (Comoros time). **Mohéli**: Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 August at ID office in Fomboni, starting at 10.00am (Comoros time).

 **For Madagascar** :
Date: Wednesday 06 August, 2025 from 10:00 to 12:00 (Madagascar time).
Location: Hotel Ibis Ankorondrano
This session can be followed online: register [here](#) to take part in the online information session in French.

 **For Mauritius** : online on Wednesday 6 August 2025 starting at 10.30am (Mauritius time). Register [here](#) to take part in the session.

 **For Seychelles**: in person session on **Monday 4 August from 9.00am to 12.00pm** (Seychelles time), **place to be confirmed**.

On this [web page](#) , a series of questions/ answers will be regularly updated by the RIT until the deadline of the call, providing detailed answers to questions submitted by applicants.

Before submitting a letter of inquiry, applicants are invited to read the "[12 tips for getting your grant idea funded](#)".

The LOI selection process will take approximately three weeks from the submission deadline. All applicants will be informed of the decision in due course.

CSOs whose applications have been pre-shortlisted will be asked to provide a more detailed LOI proposal. Approved LOI proposal will be awarded a small grant, based on an agreement between IUCN NL, as representative of the RIT, and the applicant's organization (the "Recipient").

Grants will be awarded in US dollars and grant agreements will be drawn up in English or French.

5. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

All applicants are advised to consult the Ecosystem Profile for the Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, which provides further details on the types of activities that CEPF will fund under each investment priority.

- Ecosystem profile: [English](#) - [French](#)
- Ecosystem-based adaptation in the Indian Ocean : [English](#) - [French](#)

Additional resources :

- [Eligibility](#)
- [Before you apply](#)
- [12 tips to get your grant idea funded](#)
- [CEPF project database](#)
- [Grant life cycle](#)
- WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides according to their Hazardousness [English](#) - [French](#)