Call for Letters of Inquiry (LOIs) for Small Grants Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity (GFWA) Hotspot

---

Eligible Countries:	Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe.
Opening Date:	Wednesday, 22 July, 2026
Closing Date:	Monday, 31 August, 2026
Grant size:	Up to US$50,000
Eligible Activities:	**Investment Priorities 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2**
Eligible Languages:	English, French, Portuguese, Spanish
LOI Template:	Download Here

A Rocha Ghana and AJESH, serving as the Regional Implementation Team for the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot on behalf of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), are inviting proposals in the form of letters of inquiry (LOIs) for small grants from non-governmental organizations, community groups, private enterprises, independent public institutions and other civil society organizations (CSOs). Applicants are advised to read this call for Letters of Inquiry document in full before submitting an LOI under the scope of this call.

BACKGROUND

CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, Fondation Franklinia, Fondation Hans Wilsdorf, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Canada, the Government of Japan, the Hempel Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

CEPF's strategy for the current investment is contained in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot Ecosystem Profile (in English and French). It comprises a series of strategic directions broken down into investment priorities, outlining the types of activities that are eligible for CEPF funding. Additional information can be found on the CEPF Guinean Forests of West Africa RIT website

page.

The scope of this call is limited to the types of activities described in Investment Priority (IP) 1.1, IP 2.1 and IP 2.2, which are as follows:

- **Strategic Direction 1**: Support local partnerships for conservation of globally important biodiversity in priority Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and ecological corridors – see Annex 1 for eligible sites
    - **Investment Priority 1.1**: Advance the protection and conservation management of priority KBAs and the ecological corridors that connect them

- **Strategic Direction 2**: Safeguard priority for globally threatened species and ecosystems by identifying and addressing major threats and information gaps.
    - **Investment Priority 2.1**: Consolidate and improve critical data on threatened species and ecosystems.
    - **Investment Priority 2.2**: Promote action for the conservation of threatened species and ecosystems.

Note that under Strategic Direction 2, projects solely focused on Threatened Tree species are **not eligible** under this call. A future call for Large grants focused on Threatened Trees will be published later this year.

Preference will be given to projects that address the following criteria: (i) are the closest fit to the investment priorities eligible for support under this call; (ii) have a high likelihood of achieving their stated objectives and contribute strongly to sustainable conservation outcomes; (iii) build upon past initiatives and complement ongoing initiatives; (iv) represent good value for money; and (v) demonstrate the institutional capacity and experience necessary to carry out the work. CEPF welcomes applications from current and past grantees, as well as organizations that have not previously received CEPF funding.

This is the second call for Letters of Inquiry under the CEPF Phase III investment in the Guinean Forest of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot. Future calls for proposals, both large (over $50,000) and small (up to $50,000), for the other Strategic Directions, investment priorities, and countries, will be issued at a later date.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the CEPF Guinean Forests of West Africa RIT website page, particularly the section on Grant Eligibility. Potential applicants who are uncertain of the eligibility of their organization or project concept are encouraged to contact the RIT (cepf.gfwa.info@arocha.org).

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Non-governmental organizations, community groups, universities, and small private enterprises may apply for funding. Individuals must work with civil society organizations to develop applications rather than apply directly. Organizations must have their own bank account and be authorized under relevant national laws to receive charitable contributions. Government-owned enterprises or institutions are eligible only if they can demonstrate that the enterprise or institution has:

- a legal personality independent of any government agency or actor;
- the authority to apply for and receive private funds; and

- may not assert a claim of sovereign immunity.

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.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES, ACTIVITIES, AND SITES

1. Eligible Countries

For this call, all countries in the Guinean Forests of West Africa (GFWA), which include **Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tomé and Príncipe,** will be considered. Applicants can only submit one application per organisation.

2. Eligible Activities

LOIs must propose projects that relate to the strategic directions and investment priorities outlined below, with further details provided in the Ecosystem Profile (English and French). Even if actions contribute to more than one strategic direction, applicants must identify the primary strategic direction and investment priority under which the project falls.

- **Strategic Direction 1, Investment Priority 1.1:** At the core of CEPF's mission is funding of local CSOs to work with partners (including government, private sector, community/grassroots groups and other CSOs) to conserve sites of global importance for biodiversity (i.e., Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA). Projects may address the legal status of the site, planning and management policies, or direct action with resource users and other stakeholders on the ground. Project activities may take place within a priority KBA (listed in annex 1), or they may be outside a priority KBA but necessary to achieve landscape and site conservation goals. These might include action to maintain or restore ecological connectivity between sites, and to ensure the maintenance of landscape level ecosystem services. Projects should take into account lessons from past work, including from past CEPF-funded projects.

  As stated in Ecosystem Profile (page), 33 eligible priority Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) have been identified, in 8 of the 11 countries, for support under Strategic Direction 1. Projects under this Investment priority must take place in or around at least one of the 33 priority KBAs. **See Annex 1**.

- **Strategic Direction 2:** CEPF recognizes that while many globally threatened species and ecosystems will benefit from site-based conservation under Strategic Direction 1, some require dedicated interventions due to their restricted distribution, high mobility, occurrence outside priority Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), vulnerability to unsustainable use and trade, or insufficient scientific knowledge. Through Strategic Direction 2, CEPF will support projects that address critical information gaps and implement targeted conservation actions to reduce major threats and improve the long-term survival of priority species and ecosystems. **See Annex 2** for Priority Species eligible under Strategic Direction 2.

Note that a future Large grants call focusing on all Threatened Tree species as listed in Annex 1a in the Ecosystem Profile will be published later this year. As such, projects solely focused on Threatened Tree Species are **not eligible** under this call.

- Under **Investment Priority 2.1**, CEPF will support projects that address critical knowledge gaps needed to inform effective conservation planning and action. This includes:
    - Conducting field surveys to improve knowledge of the status and conservation needs of priority threatened species and ecosystems.
    - Undertaking research to better understand conservation threats and their socioeconomic drivers.
    - Compiling, analyzing, and synthesizing existing biodiversity data from multiple sources.
    - Publishing and communicating data in formats that support site managers, policymakers, and other conservation stakeholders.

Under **Investment Priority 2.2**, CEPF will support targeted conservation actions that directly address the needs of priority threatened species and ecosystems. This includes:

- Assessing threats and identifying practical conservation solutions.
- Developing and implementing species conservation or action plans.
- Collaborating with protected area authorities, landowners, local communities, and other stakeholders to strengthen species and habitat protection.
- Implementing conservation interventions and monitoring their effectiveness.
- Promoting knowledge exchange, stakeholder engagement, and learning visits to strengthen conservation outcomes and share best practices.

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) capitalization of trust funds. All activities must comply with CEPF's social and environmental policies, which can be found here. Please refer to CEPF's safeguard video series for further guidance.

BUDGET AND TIMEFRAME

CEPF-GFWA RIT will entertain proposals up to US $50,000. The earliest possible timeframe for the award of grants is November 2026.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications (Letters of Inquiry (LOIs)) can be submitted in English, French, Spanish, or

Portuguese by **11:59 PM (GMT) on Monday, 31 August 2026**. All applications must be submitted via the GFWA RIT email: cepf.gfwa.applications@arocha.org.

Applicants must complete the official LOI template, which can be downloaded here: **CEPF GFWA Small Grants Letter of Inquiry (LOI) Template 2026**

The GFWA RIT will not accept LOIs via any other email address or through any other submission mechanism. You will receive an acknowledgement from the RIT confirming that your submission has been received.

Questions regarding the Small Grant application process should be emailed to cepf.gfwa.info@arocha.org.

The Small Grant application review process will take approximately seven weeks from the deadline date. The review committee will select the strongest LOIs that meet the eligibility criteria. All applicants will receive a response from the RIT following the review of their application. Once approved, the applicant would work with the RIT to finalize an approved working budget, workplan, and logframe. This will be followed by the signing of a grant agreement, which will be awarded by A Rocha Ghana, as the Lead organisation of the RIT for the GFWA, and the applicant's institution (the "grantee"). Grants will be denominated in United States dollars, and grant agreements will be in English.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

All applicants are advised to review the CEPF Investment Strategy for the Guinean Forests of West Africa within the ecosystem profile (in English and French). This provides more detail on the types of activities CEPF will fund under each investment priority.

CEPF and the RIT are committed to integrating gender into its portfolio. Applicants should design projects and write proposals that consider gender issues in the achievement of their conservation impacts. Visit the CEPF Gender webpage to learn more about how CEPF addresses gender in the projects it supports and to access resources that can help applicants to design, implement and evaluate gender-aware projects (CEPF Gender Toolkit, available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish; CEPF Gender Fact Sheet available in English and Portuguese; and the Gender Toolkit). The integration of gender in your project will be a factor in evaluation.

Further, CEPF and the RIT are guided by the belief that social sustainability, anchored in inclusive, equitable and locally grounded approaches, is essential to achieving CEPF's mission of long-term conservation impact and community ownership. Applicants should design projects that consider equity and inclusion in the achievement of their conservation impacts. Visit the CEPF Social Sustainability webpage to learn more and access CEPF's Social Sustainability Policy and Guidelines. Resources to support applicants to design projects that consider equity and inclusion will be made available on this webpage shortly.

Additional Resources:

- Before You Apply
- 12 Tips for Getting Your Grant Idea Funded

- CEPF Project Database
- Life Cycle of a Grant
- Frequently Asked Questions

In August 2026, the RIT will be hosting online Information Sessions regarding this Call for Letters of Inquiry. The relevant details will be posted on the RIT Webpage for this call.

Annex 1:

List of eligible sites for SD 1:

KBA Code	KBA Name	Country
CMR1	Bakossi mountains	Cameroon
CMR3	Bamboutos Mountains	Cameroon
CMR5	Korup National Park	Cameroon
CMR9	Mont Manengouba	Cameroon
CMR10	Mont Nganha	Cameroon
CMR12	Mount Cameroon and Mokoko-Onge	Cameroon
CMR13	Mount Lefo	Cameroon
CMR15	Mount Oku	Cameroon
CMR16	Mount Rata and Rumpi Hills Forest Reserve	Cameroon
CMR18	Tchabal-Mbabo	Cameroon
CMR19	Yabassi	Cameroon
CMR20	Eastern Bamenda highlands and associated hydrobasin	Cameroon
CMR11	Mont Nlonako	Cameroon
CIV11	Taï National Park and Nzo Faunal Reserve	Côte d'Ivoire
CIV8	Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve	Côte d'Ivoire
GHA2	Ankasa Resource Reserve – Nini-Sushien National Park	Ghana
GHA3	Atewa Range Forest Reserve	Ghana
GIN8	Massif du Ziama	Guinea
GIN9	Monts Nimba (part of Mount Nimba transboundary AZE) *	Guinea
GNQ1	Annobón	Equatorial Guinea
GNQ2	Luba Caldera Scientific Reserve	Equatorial Guinea
GNQ3	Basilé Peak National Park	Equatorial Guinea
LBR1	Cestos – Senkwen	Liberia
LBR2	Cestos Gbi	Liberia
LBR7	Grebo	Liberia
LBR14	Sapo	Liberia
fw12	Weeni creek and associated hydrobasin	Liberia
LBR11	Lofa-Gola-Mano Complex	Liberia
LBR12	Nimba mountains	Liberia
NGA4	Cross River National Park (Oban Division)	Nigeria

NGA14	Idanre Hills*	Nigeria
STP1	Parque Natural Obô de São Tomé e Zona Tampão	São Tomé and Príncipe
STP2	Príncipe forests	São Tomé and Príncipe

Annex 2:

Priority Species for CEPF Investment

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name
Amphibians		
1	*Alexteroon jynx*	Smooth Egg-guarding Frog
2	*Arthroleptis krokosua*	Krokosua Squeaking Frog
3	*Astylosternus nganhanus*	Nganha Night Frog
4	*Cardioglossa manengouba*	Manengouba long-fingered frog
5	*Cardioglossa trifasciata*	Nsoung Long-fingered Frog
6	*Conraua derooi*	Togo Slippery Frog
7	*Conraua sagyimase*	Atewa Slippery Frog
8	*Crotaphatrema lamottei*	Mount Oku caecilian
9	*Leptodactylodon axillaris*	*na*
10	*Leptodactylodon erythrogaster*	Redbelly Egg Frog
11	*Leptodactylodon wildi*	Wild's Egg Frog
12	*Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis*	Mount Nimba Viviparous Toad
13	*Petropedetes perreti*	Perret's Water Frog
14	*Phrynobatrachus afiabirago*	Afia Birago's Puddle Frog
15	*Phrynobatrachus chukuchuku*	Spiny Puddle Frog
16	*Phrynobatrachus intermedius*	Intermediate Puddle Frog
17	*Phrynobatrachus jimzimkusi*	Jim Zimkus' Puddle Frog
18	*Phrynobatrachus njiomock*	Lake Oku Puddle Frog
19	*Sclerophrys perreti*	Perret's Toad
20	*Werneria bambutensis*	Bamboutos Smalltongue Toad
21	*Werneria mertensiana*	Mertens' Smalltongue Toad
22	*Werneria tandyi*	Tandy's Smalltongue Toad
23	*Wolterstorffina chirioi*	Mount Oku Wolterstorff Toad
24	*Wolterstorffina parvipalmata*	Cameroon Wolterstorff Toad
25	*Xenopus longipes*	Lake Oku Clawed Frog
Birds		
26	*Bostrychia bocagei*	São Tomé Ibis
27	*Crithagra concolor*	São Tomé Grosbeak
28	*Lanius newtoni*	Newton's Fiscal
29	*Otus feae*	Annobón Scops Owl
30	*Otus bikegila*	Principe Scops Owl
31	*Turdus xanthorhynchus*	Principe Thrush

Bony Fishes		
32	*Callopanchax monroviae*	*na*
33	*Clarias maclareni*	*na*
34	*Coptodon coffea*	*na*
35	*Enteromius bagbwensis*	*na*
36	*Enteromius clauseni*	*na*
37	*Enteromius melanotaenia*	*na*
38	*Epiplatys coccinatus*	*na*
39	*Fundulopanchax scheeli*	Scheeli Killifish
40	*Konia dikume*	*na*
41	*Konia eisentrauti*	*na*
42	*Labeo curriei*	*na*
43	*Ladigesia roloffi*	*na*

44	*Myaka myaka*	*na*
45	*Parauchenoglanis buettikoferi*	*na*
46	*Pungu maclareni*	*na*
47	*Sarotherodon caroli*	*na*
48	*Sarotherodon linnellii*	*na*
49	*Sarotherodon steinbachi*	*na*
50	*Scriptaphyosemion etzeli*	*na*
51	*Scriptaphyosemion schmitti*	*na*
52	*Stomatepia mariae*	*na*
53	*Stomatepia mongo*	*na*
54	*Stomatepia pindu*	*na*
55	*Synodontis macrophthalmus*	Squeaker Catfish
Freshwater crabs and shrimp		
56	*Afrithelphusa leonensis*	*na*
57	*Liberonautes grandbassa*	*na*
58	*Liberonautes lugbe*	*na*
Insects		
59	*Elattoneura pluotae*	*na*

Mammals		
60	*Cercopithecus roloway*	Roloway Monkey
61	*Crocidura wimmeri*	Wimmer's Shrew
62	*Hipposideros lamottei*	Lamotte's Roundleaf Bat
63	*Lophuromys eisentrauti*	Mount Lefo Brush-furred Rat
64	*Myosorex eisentrauti*	Eisentraut's Mouse Shrew
65	*Piliocolobus epieni*	Niger Delta Red Colobus
66	*Piliocolobus pennantii*	Pennant's Red Colobus
67	*Piliocolobus preussi*	Preuss's Red Colobus
68	*Piliocolobus waldroni*	Miss Waldron’s Red Colobus
Mollusks		
69	*Bellamya liberiana*	*na*
70	*Coelatura essoensis*	*na*
71	*Melanoides voltae*	*na*
72	*Pleiodon ovatus*	*na*
73	*Potadoma angulata*	*na*
74	*Potadoma togoensis*	*na*
75	*Pseudocleopatra togoensis*	*na*
Plants		
76	*Acridocarpus staudtii*	*na*
77	*Aubregrinia taiensis*	Great Tiger-nut Tree
78	*Ledermanniella keayi*	*na*
79	*Talbotiella gentii*	*na*
80	*Tarenna hutchinsonii*	*na*
Reptiles		
81	*Cynisca gansi*	*na*
82	*Lacertaspis lepesmei*	Angel's Five-toed Skink
83	*Trachylepis nganghae*	*na*
Sharks, Rays		
84	*Fontitrygon garouaensis*	Niger Stingray