

Call for Letters of Inquiry Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot

Large Grants

Eligible Countries:	Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
Opening Date:	Wednesday, 6 May 2020
Closing Date:	Wednesday, 17 June 2020
Grant Size:	US\$20,000 to US\$150,000

CEPF and WWF Russia, as regional implementation team for the hotspot, are accepting letters of inquiry (LOIs) from non-government organizations, community groups, indigenous people's organizations, women's groups, private companies and other civil society organizations in relation to the eligible activities and geographies described below. This is the first of several large-grant calls for proposals (CFP) that will be made public through 2024.

BACKGROUND

The [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund](#) (CEPF) is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

The Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot covers varying proportions of Afghanistan, China, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. CEPF's niche for investment in the region was formulated through a participatory process that engaged civil society, donor and government stakeholders throughout the region. The resulting investment strategy (2019-2024) is documented within the ecosystem profile, available in [English](#) (PDF – 5.5 MB) and [Russian](#) (PDF – 7 MB). This investment strategy is comprised of a series of strategic directions, broken down into investment priorities outlining the types of activities that are eligible for CEPF funding.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the CEPF website, particularly the sections on [Eligibility](#), [Before You Apply](#) and [How to Apply](#). Potential applicants who are uncertain of the eligibility of their organization or project concept are encouraged to contact the people listed below for clarification.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The scope of this call is limited to the types of activities and locations described below. LOIs will only be accepted for the following strategic directions and countries:

- **Strategic Directions:** 2, 3, 4, 5
- **Countries:** Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Afghanistan

Themes

- Wakhan Valley conservation and development.

Investment Priorities

- 2.1. Facilitate effective collaboration among civil society organizations (CSOs), local communities and park management units to enhance protected area networks.
- 2.2. Develop and implement management approaches to sustainable use in Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) outside official protected areas.
- 2.3. Build support and develop capacity for identification and recognition of KBAs.
- 5.1. Enable and enhance communication and collaboration between civil society and communities and government agencies responsible for implementing national biodiversity strategies.
- 5.2. Enhance CSOs' capacity for planning, implementation, outreach, sharing of best practice, fundraising and communication.
- 5.3. Catalyze networking and collaboration among CSOs and between CSOs and public-sector partners.
- 5.4. Promote greater sources of funding for civil society to become engaged in conservation action.
- 5.5 Support action-oriented environmental education.

Kazakhstan

Themes

- Address issues of transboundary landscapes, species conservation, economic development and protected area network development in the mountains in the southeastern part of the country.
- Protection of threatened and endemic species, wildlife, and engagement of local nature users and capacity building for more effective functioning of the KBA.

Investment Priorities

- 2.1. Facilitate effective collaboration among CSOs, local communities and park management units to enhance protected area networks.

Kyrgyzstan

Themes

- Vulnerable ecosystems with a high population density, active involvement of local residents in alternative wildlife management.
- Introducing spatial monitoring and reporting tools (SMART) for optimization and protection of protected areas and KBAs of Kyrgyzstan.

Investment Priorities

- 2.1. Facilitate effective collaboration among CSOs, local communities and park management units to enhance protected area networks.
- 2.3. Build support and develop capacity for identification and recognition of KBAs.
- 4.2. Promote mainstreaming of conservation into livestock and farm management practices.
- 4.5. Engage the media as a tool to increase awareness about globally threatened species and KBAs and inform public debate of conservation issues.

Tajikistan

Themes

- Create a stable balance of ecosystem and species conservation and development of local communities (with additional assessment of transboundary work) in the Pamir Mountains.
- Key role of CSOs of Tajikistan in attitude changes of local residents and individuals in charge of decision-making toward sustainable resource use and protection of natural resources.

Investment Priorities

- 3.3. Support civil society efforts to analyse development plans and programs; evaluate their impact on biodiversity, communities and livelihoods; and propose alternative scenarios and appropriate mitigating measures.
- 4.1. Engage hunting associations, tourism operators, and mining companies in conservation management and establishing valuation mechanisms for biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- 4.2. Promote mainstreaming of conservation into livestock and farm management practices.
- 5.5. Support action-oriented environmental education.

Uzbekistan

Themes

- Optimization of conservation of the whole complex of ecosystems and species of the Western Tien Shan within and outside protected areas.

Investment Priorities

- 3.2. Evaluate and integrate biodiversity and ecosystem service values into land-use and development planning.
- 5.5. Support action-oriented environmental education.

ELIGIBLE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

CEPF focuses its work on conservation outcomes, seeking to protect species, sites and corridors. The core of this work is around Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), which are the refuge of globally threatened species and around which larger corridors are based. Chapter 4 of the ecosystem profile lists all species, KBAs and corridors in the region, and Chapter 12 lists the priority species, KBAs and corridors. Unless otherwise noted, applicants should focus on the priorities identified below and in Chapter 12.

This call for proposals is open only for projects working in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Table 12.2 of the Ecosystem Profile lists **priority KBAs**.

- Applicants that submit proposals for **priority KBAs, from the eligible countries**, and that also address the Investment Priorities named above will receive the highest consideration from reviewers.

Table 4.3 (Afghanistan), Table 4.5 (Kazakhstan), Table 4.6 (Kyrgyzstan), Table 4.7 (Tajikistan), and Table 4.9 (Uzbekistan) of the Ecosystem Profile list all KBAs in each country, both priority and non-priority.

- Applicants that submit proposals for work in non-priority KBAs from the eligible countries must specifically address one of the Investment Priorities named above in order to receive any consideration from reviewers.

Table 12.3 in the Ecosystem Profile lists **priority corridors**. For this solicitation, CEPF seeks proposals that address corridor-wide issues, related to the named Investment Priorities, in:

Corridor 7. Turkestan and Alai Mountains
Corridor 9. Western Tien Shan
Corridor 15. Pamir-Alai and Wakhan Mountains
Corridor 22. Dzungaria

The Ecosystem Profile lists all KBAs and corridors with specific names and identification/code numbers. **Applicants are advised to name specific KBAs and corridors by name and number in your Letter of Inquiry.**

BUDGET AND TIMEFRAME

LOIs must have a budget indicated in the grant size, above, to be eligible for consideration.

Projects are expected to start approximately six to nine months from the release of this call for LOIs. CEPF projects are typically 18-24 months in duration, but all work must be complete by June 2024.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Project proposals should be built on **biodiversity conservation as a fundamental component** and should demonstrate positive impacts on the conservation status of biodiversity.

Where relevant, applicants are encouraged to submit LOIs that **harmonize with existing national or regional initiatives**. Synergies with other organizations are also eligible, with one lead organization submitting the application alongside sub-grantee project partners.

Applicants based outside of eligible countries may submit an LOI as long as the project deliverables are focused on the conservation need within an eligible country/countries.

International organizations are encouraged to involve local organizations or communities as project partners, or explain how local stakeholders will be engaged as part of project implementation.

Applicants are advised to read the **investment strategy chapter of the ecosystem profile** (Chapter 12) to ensure full understanding of the strategic directions and investment priorities.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must respond to the call via the [ConservationGrants](#) electronic portal. CEPF will not accept letters of inquiry via email or any other mechanism.

If you have not previously used ConservationGrants, you will need to [register for a new account](#). If you encounter any technical difficulties with ConservationGrants, please email conservationgrants@conservation.org.

SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS

ConservationGrants will automatically confirm receipt of all LOIs that are properly submitted within the system by the closing date.

The LOI review process will take approximately eight weeks from the closing date. All applicants will receive a response from CEPF following review of their submissions. The review committee will select the strongest LOIs that meet the eligibility criteria.

Applicants whose LOIs receive a positive review will be invited to submit a full proposal, again through ConservationGrants. 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 organization (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 Mountains of Central Asia within the ecosystem profile (Chapter 12). This provides more detail on the types of activities CEPF will fund under each investment priority:

- [Full Ecosystem Profile – English](#) (PDF - 5.5 MB)
- [Full Ecosystem Profile – Russian](#) (PDF - 7 MB)
- [Ecosystem Profile Technical Summary – English](#) (PDF - 2 MB)
- [Ecosystem Profile Technical Summary – Russian](#) (PDF - 1.5 MB)
- [Ecosystem Profile Visual Summary – English](#) (PDF - 22 MB)
- [Ecosystem Profile Visual Summary – Russian](#) (PDF - 21 MB)

CEPF is 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.

CEPF has developed several resources that can help applicants to design, implement and evaluate gender-aware projects ([CEPF Gender Toolkit](#), PDF – 359 KB) and understand what CEPF seeks in a proposal ([CEPF Gender Fact Sheet](#), PDF – 352 KB). Visit the [CEPF and Gender webpage](#) to learn more about how CEPF addresses gender in the projects it supports.

The integration of gender in your project will be a factor in evaluation.

Additional resources:

- [Before You Apply](#)
- [12 Tips for Getting Your Grant Idea Funded](#)
- [CEPF Project Database](#)
- [Life Cycle of a Grant](#)
- [ConservationGrants Frequently Asked Questions](#)

CONTACT

Before applying, applicants are encouraged to discuss project ideas and eligibility with the program officer for your region:

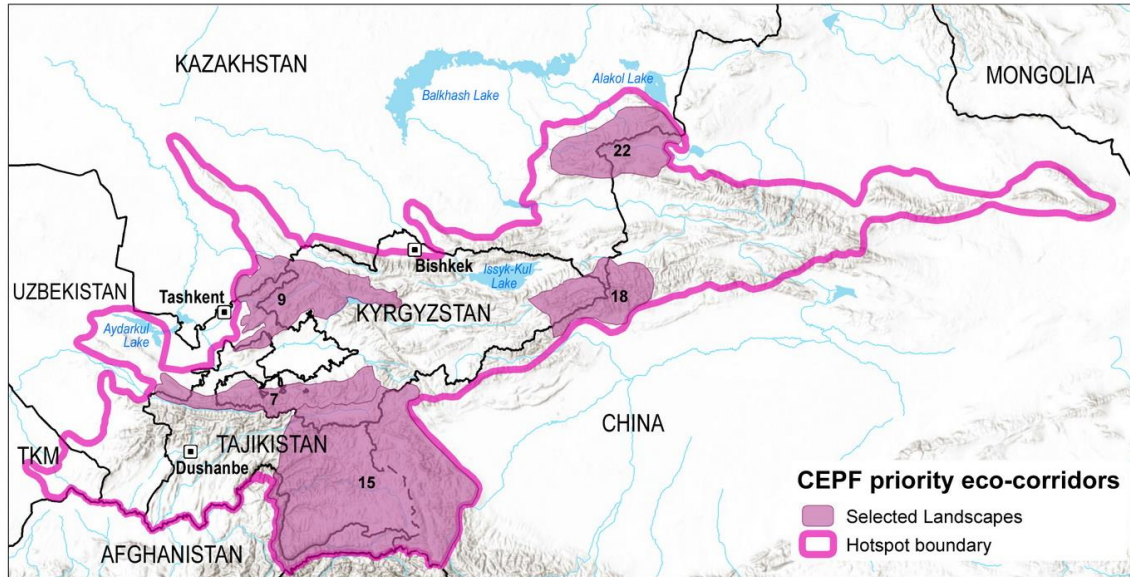
- Lizza Protas, RIT Team Leader: lprotas@wwf.ru
- Grigory Mazmanians, Director of the Central Asia Program of WWF Russia

Technical questions regarding the ConservationGrants online system should be emailed to conservationgrants@conservation.org.

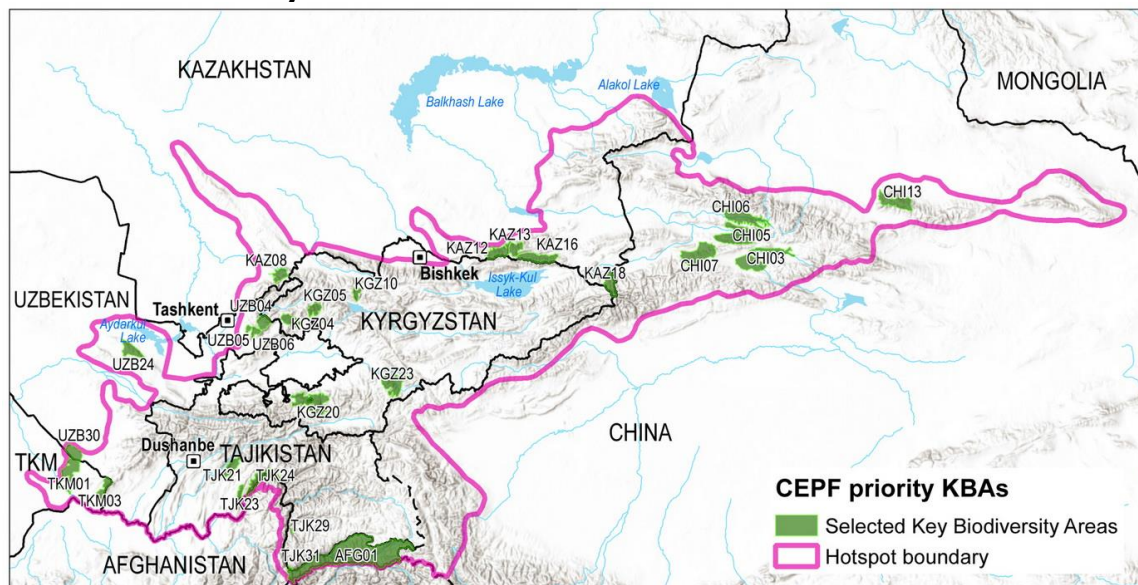
For general queries about the CEPF Mountains of Central Asia program, please contact Regional Implementation Team Leader Lizza Protas at lprotas@wwf.ru or visit the regional implementation team website, www.mca.earth.

Maps of the Priority KBAs and Corridors relevant to this CFP

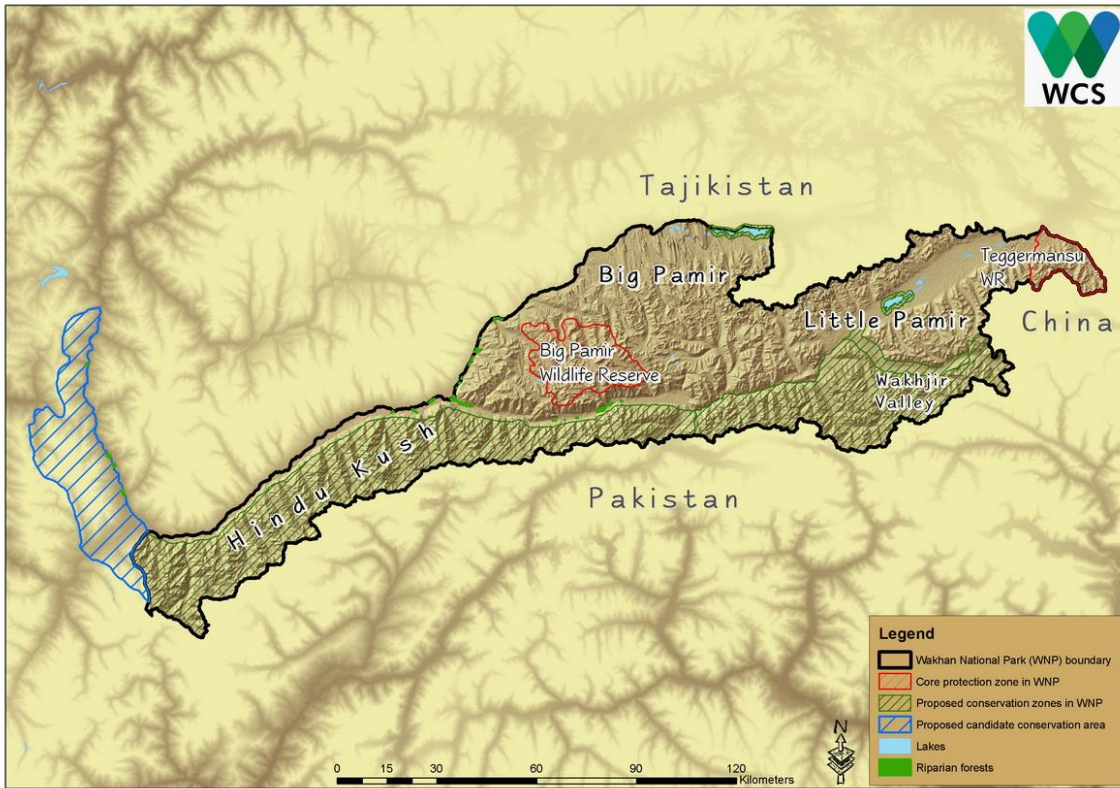
Priority Corridors in the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot



Overview of Priority KBAs in the Mountains of Central Asia



KBAs in Afghanistan



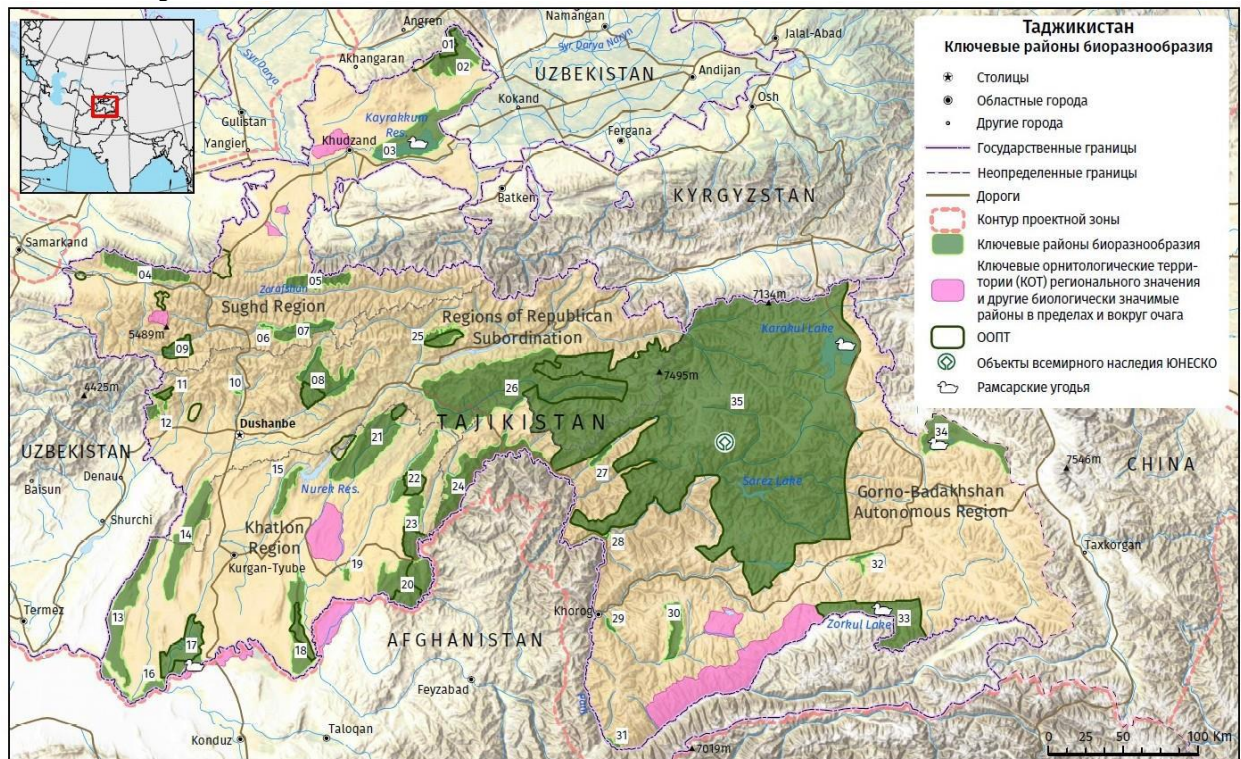
KBAs in Kazakhstan



KBAs in Kyrgyzstan



KBAs in Tajikistan



KBAs in Uzbekistan

