CEPF and BirdLife Make First Grants in Cambodia and Vietnam

Nature conservation in Indochina took a small but significant step forward today with the approval of the first two small grants by BirdLife International in Indochina who act as the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund’s Regional Implementation Team. Both are small grant applications, submitted well before the first deadline for submission of Letters of Inquiry (LoIs) on 30th November 2008.

The Harrison Institute will receive USD 20,000 to carry out field research to assess the status and distribution of the poorly-known Wroughton’s Free-tailed Bat (Otomops wroughtoni) in Chhep District, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia. This species is known only from two sites in India, and one record in Cambodia. Workshops and targeted media outreach during the project will aim to build capacity of local communities, students and conservationists in bat research and conservation and raise awareness of the important role bats play in ecosystems.

The Missouri Botanical Garden has received nearly USD 5,000 to support 20 junior botanists and students from Vietnam to attend the first international symposium of the “Flora of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam” in Phnom Penh, Cambodia this month, thus helping to build a strong network of academics, researchers, conservation professionals, and institutions working together to generate scientific knowledge and primary baseline data for sound decision-making on the conservation of threatened plant diversity in Indochina. CEPF has identified a major need for investigation of the status and distribution of globally threatened plant species in Indochina.

“We are very pleased to be making the first small grants under the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund only four months after the launch of this funding” said Jonathan C. Eames, Programme Manager of BirdLife International in Indochina. “These two organisations submitted early applications with aims that were squarely within CEPF’s investment priorities, and we believe their work will provide a strong foundation for future conservation in Indochina.”

Review of applications to CEPF is carried out not only by internal experts from BirdLife and CEPF, but also by national Technical Review Groups, comprising experienced international and local conservation practitioners and academics. More than 60 additional Letters of Inquiry are currently being processed, and BirdLife and CEPF expect to make many further grants to further biodiversity conservation in Indochina in the coming time.

Further information

In August 2008, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) was formally launched for the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot, one of the most threatened of Earth’s 34 biodiversity hotspots. CEPF is a joint initiative of l’Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, 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. With an investment of US$ 9.5 million over five years in Indochina, CEPF will provide grants enabling non-governmental organizations, community groups, and other private sector entities to help conserve the hotspot. More information can be found at [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net)

BirdLife International *in Indochina* ([www.birdlifeindochina.org](http://www.birdlifeindochina.org)) was selected to be the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) for CEPF in Indochina. It helps raise awareness of CEPF; solicit grant applications and assist organisations to make applications; review applications; give small grants and jointly make decisions with CEPF on large grants; and monitor and evaluate progress with the investment strategy. Following the launch of CEPF for the Indo-Burma hotspot, the BirdLife CEPF-RIT issued a first call for Letters of Inquiry for Cambodia and Vietnam with a deadline of 30th November 2008. It is intended that eligible areas of Lao P.D.R., Thailand, and China will be addressed by future calls for LoIs.

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