

CALL FOR PARTNERSHIPS (CFP)

from

Not-for-Profit Institutions

Ref: CFP/WHC/RRF

(Please quote this UNESCO reference in all correspondence)

14/08/2026

Closing date: 06/09/2026 (23:59 Paris time)

Submission via email to: wh-nature@unesco.org

Inquiries via email to: wh-nature@unesco.org

I. BACKGROUND:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the [Sustainable Development Goals in Agenda 2030](#) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. This Call for Partnerships (CFP) for Implementation Partners relates to the UNESCO project:

Rapid Response Facility (RRF)

The Rapid Response Facility (RRF) provides emergency support to natural world heritage sites in developing countries. The RRF is a grant facility specifically designed to provide rapid support to these sites of outstanding universal value when crises hit. Without a timely response in such situations, key elements of the natural sites, such as tracts of forest or some of the iconic species they support, could be lost forever.

II. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS/ DELIVERABLES:

The objective of this Call for Proposals is to identify a partner to implement RRF activities by managing a grant portfolio of up to USD 240,000 (for two years) as follows:

1) Grant management:

- a. Screen all RRF emergency small grant (up to USD 40 000) applications for eligibility (about 60 applications to examine per year), and review all eligible applications (about 5 per year);
- b. Identify potential expert reviewers, and secure rapid expert reviews for each eligible application;
- c. Prepare a concise Application Summary for each eligible application, for review by the RRF Committee;
- d. Arrange small grant contracts and fund transfers for approved grants;
- e. Monitor application and fund processing times, and set deadlines for expert reviews and Project Coordination Group (PCG) decisions;
- f. Manage communications with applicants and successful grantees;
- g. Monitor performance of grants, and provide additional support where necessary e.g. guidance on budget deviations or no cost extensions;
- h. Secure translations of RRF documents from English to French or Spanish (or vice versa), where necessary.

2) RRF Performance:

- a. Monitor and evaluate RRF conservation impact, including minimum one site visit every two years;
- b. Monitor internal RRF operational performance e.g. speed / transparency of funding decisions;
- c. Ensure biannual reporting to RRF PCG.

3) Communications:

- a. Maintain and update the RRF website;
- b. Represent the RRF at relevant events;
- c. Identify opportunities to communicate the role and impacts of the RRF to potential applicants, donors and other stakeholders.

4) Administration / Fundraising:

- a. Manage RRF accounts and reporting requirements to donors and RRF partners – where possible, the RRF Secretariat will provide members of the Partnership with information tailored to the specific reporting requirements of donors;
- b. Raise funds: identify potential donors, prepare proposal etc. - in collaboration with RRF partners;
- c. Coordinate annual RRF PCG meeting, (and teleconferences) as required;
- d. Provide brief monthly RRF updates to the PCG in a standard format, including current operational performance statistics; full technical and financial report to be submitted biannually.

5) Partnership:

- a. Identify and monitor potentially complementary stakeholders, and investigate partnership potential;
- b. Make recommendations on potential partnerships to the PCG, and support their development as agreed and appropriate.

Final Beneficiaries

Eligible proposals will be those focused on natural World Heritage sites and biosphere reserves, as well as sites inscribed on the Tentative World Heritage List in developing countries and targeting these different sites (e.g. fauna and flora, local communities, site managers, etc...) as the direct and final beneficiaries.

II. ELIGIBILITY:

A UNESCO Implementation Partner is an entity with a not-for-profit status to which UNESCO has entrusted partially or fully the implementation of programmes or projects specified in a signed document, along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the delivery of outputs as set forth in such a document.

Main features of a UNESCO Implementation Partners' Agreement
The partner brings added value, including monetary or in-kind contribution, to the project/activity
The partner shares in the risks and rewards of the project/activity implementation and is responsible and accountable for delivering expected results
The partner is involved at each step of the process, from detailed work plan elaboration to project/activity evaluation.
The partnership will include aspects beyond the delivery of a service to include capacity-building elements with respect to the partner and/or beneficiary

The parameters that will determine whether an entity is eligible to be considered by UNESCO will be based on the UNESCO Partner Identification form – **Annex 1**

III. PROPOSAL:

Eligibility and qualification :

This section focuses on strengths of partner's internal controls and past programmatic experience, which can be evidenced by:

- At least 1 donor letter or proof of a similar project implementation, preferably grant management or similar,
- Capacity to intervene across the world, in particular in developing countries,
- Not for profit legal registration (entity existing since at least 2 years),
- Clean audit opinion on partner's corporate accounts (last 2 years).

Proposed Methodology, Approach, Quality Assurance Plan and Implementation Plan

This section should demonstrate the entity's response to the Terms of Reference by identifying the specific components proposed, how the outputs/ delivery shall be addressed, as specified; providing a detailed description of the essential performance characteristics proposed; identifying the works/portions of the work that will be subcontracted.

Moreover the proposal should demonstrate how the proposed methodology meets or exceeds the TOR, while ensuring appropriateness of the approach to the local conditions and the rest of the project operating environment. This methodology must be laid out in an implementation timetable and a quality assurance. Preference will be given to partners providing risk assessment (identified risks together with risk mitigation) and sustainable procurement criteria such as corporate environmental, gender and human rights policies.

Management Structure and Resource (Key Personnel)

This section should include the comprehensive description of the management structure and information regarding required resources including curriculum vitae (CVs) of key personnel that will be assigned to support the implementation of the proposed methodology, clearly defining the qualifications in areas relevant to the TOR. Key personnel should possess the following qualifications:

- Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in Environmental Management or Science, International Relations, or related fields,
- Demonstrated experience in grant management,
- Demonstrated working experience on World Heritage sites.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY:

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 1) Sound technical proposal that includes innovative and replicable inclusion mechanisms to maximize the value transfer to the beneficiaries.
- 2) High impact interventions directly targeting and responding to the needs established in the TOR.
- 3) Size of budget requested commensurate with the organization's proven administrative and financial management capacity.
- 4) Participatory monitoring and evaluation that will contribute to building a sense of ownership among the beneficiaries to promote the sustainability of the interventions.

Proposals will be rated according to a combined technical and financial evaluation. The methodology and the score card for the technical evaluation is provided below.

Highest Total Score of Weighted Technical and Financial Criteria

Summary of Technical Proposal Evaluation Form			Points Obtainable		Name of Firm / Institution		
		A			B	C	
	General criteria	Issues to consider/benchmark					
1.	Eligibility and qualifications of an entity submitting proposal (max 400 points in total)		Max 400 points				
	Not for profit legal registration (entity existing since at least 2 years) – mandatory		YES	QUALIFIED			
			NO	DISQUALIFIED			
	Clean audit opinion on partner's corporate accounts (last 2 years) – mandatory		YES	QUALIFIED			
			NO	DISQUALIFIED			
	A minimum annual programme/ project portfolio of the organisation is over USD 200,000 – mandatory		YES	QUALIFIED			
			NO	DISQUALIFIED			
	A minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience with biodiversity conservation and protected areas – mandatory		YES	QUALIFIED			
			NO	DISQUALIFIED			
	1.1 Experience in biodiversity conservation and protected areas (max 100 points)	The organisation demonstrates: - experience implementing biodiversity conservation programmes; - experience supporting protected areas or UNESCO-designated sites; - knowledge of conservation challenges in developing countries.	Excellent evidence exceeding expectations	100			
			Good evidence	75			
			Satisfactory evidence	50			
			Limited evidence	25			
			No relevant evidence	0			
	1.2 Experience working in developing countries (max 100 points)	The organisation demonstrates: - successful implementation of projects in developing countries; - capacity to operate internationally; - experience working with governments, NGOs and local stakeholders.	Excellent evidence exceeding expectations	100			
			Good evidence	75			
			Satisfactory evidence	50			
			Limited evidence	25			
			No relevant evidence	0			
1.3 Experience with UNESCO World Heritage and/or Biosphere Reserves (max 100 points)	The organisation demonstrates: - direct experience implementing projects in World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves or other UNESCO-designated sites; - understanding of UNESCO procedures and international conservation frameworks;	Excellent evidence exceeding expectations	100				
		Good evidence	75				
			50				

		experience working with site managers and protected area authorities.	Satisfactory evidence				
			Limited evidence	25			
			No relevant evidence	0			
	1.4 Demonstrated grant management capacity (max 100 points)	The organisation demonstrates: - management of competitive grant schemes; - management of donor-funded portfolios; - financial oversight and reporting; - ability to administer multiple grants simultaneously; - strong fiduciary systems.	Excellent evidence exceeding expectations	100			
			Good evidence	75			
			Satisfactory evidence	50			
Limited evidence			25				
No relevant evidence			0				
2.	Proposed Methodology, Approach, and Implementation Plan (max 200 points in total)		Max 200 points				
	2.1 Grant management methodology (max 70 points)	Proposal demonstrates: - efficient application screening; - rapid review procedures; - transparent decision-making; - quality control; - clear workflow.	Excellent	70			
			Good	55			
			Satisfactory	35			
			Limited	20			
			No evidence	0			
	2.2 Monitoring, reporting and performance management (max 50 points)	Proposal demonstrates: - monitoring of grants; - reporting procedures; - performance indicators; - conservation impact monitoring; - adaptive management.	Excellent	50			
			Good	35			
			Satisfactory	25			
			Limited	15			
			No evidence	0			
	2.3 Communications, partnerships and fundraising (max 40 points)	Proposal demonstrates: - strategy for communications; - website management; - donor engagement; - partnership development; - visibility of RRF.	Excellent	40			
			Good	30			
			Satisfactory	20			
			Limited	10			
			No evidence	0			
	2.4 Risk management and organisational policies (max 40 points)	Proposal demonstrates: - risk assessment; - mitigation measures; - financial controls;	Excellent	40			
			Good	30			

		• environmental policy; • gender policy; • human rights policy; • clean audit history.	Satisfactory	20			
			Limited	10			
			No evidence	0			
			Max 100 points				
3.	Management Structure and Key Personnel (max 100 points in total)						
	3.1 Management structure (max 40 points)	The proposed management structure demonstrates: • clear governance; • defined responsibilities; • efficient decision-making; • adequate staffing.	Excellent	40			
			Good	30			
			Satisfactory	20			
			Limited	10			
			No evidence	0			
	3.2 Key personnel (max 60 points)	Key personnel demonstrate: • advanced qualifications; • grant management expertise; • experience with UNESCO and World Heritage; • conservation expertise; • international programme management experience.	Excellent	60			
			Good	45			
			Satisfactory	30			
			Limited	15			
			No evidence	0			
	Total			700			

Financial Proposal Evaluation Form

Sample: Summary of Financial Proposal		Points Obtainable	Name of Firm / Institution		
			A	B	C
	Financial Proposal	300			
	Sub-total for Financial Evaluation	300			

Evaluation of the price proposals (of all Entities who have attained minimum 70 % score in the technical evaluation) will be based on the weight scoring method as follows:

1. Financial proposals are opened and list of prices is prepared, where the lowest price is ranked as the first one (receiving highest amount of points) and the most expensive as the last one (receiving the least amount of points).
2. Lowest price is given maximum points (e.g. 300), for other prices the points are assigned based on the following formula: $[\text{Amount of points} = \frac{\text{lowest price}}{\text{other price}} \times \text{total points obtainable for financial proposal}]$

An example:

3. Offeror A – lowest price ranked as 1st in the amount of USD 10,000 = a
4. Offeror B – second lowest price ranked as 2nd in the amount of USD 15,000 = b
Points assigned to A = 300 & Points assigned to B = 200 (following formula: $a/b \times 300$ i.e. $10,000/15,000 \times 300 = 200$ points)

Combined Technical and Financial Evaluation

Sample: Summary of Financial Proposal Evaluation Forms		Points Obtainable	Name of Firm / Institution			
			A	B	C	D
	Sub-total Technical Proposal	700				
	Sub-total Financial Proposal	300				

V. BUDGET SIZE AND DURATION :

The amount requested in the proposal should be commensurate with the organization's administrative and financial management capabilities. In principle, project duration will not exceed 24 months.

Regarding the budget of the technical proposal of the partner, UNESCO retains the right to elaborate the work plan and negotiate the budget with the partner, prior to signing agreement, to ensure value of money. Likewise, UNESCO will ensure that in accordance with its policies the selected Partner will be able to provide added value in terms of financial or in-kind contribution. The partner's financial or in-kind contribution will be indicated in the budget proposal. No overheads in terms of administrative or service fees are accepted (direct budgeting based on activities).

UNESCO reserves the right to award additional contracts based on the outcome of this Call for partnerships, under similar design, for two additional years, subject to partner's performance and receipt of funding.

VI. SELECTION PROCESS:

UNESCO will review proposals through a five-step process: (i) determination of eligibility; (ii) technical review of eligible proposals; (iii) scoring and ranking of the eligible proposals based on the assessment criteria outlined in the previous section, to identify highest ranking proposal; (iv) round of clarification (if

necessary) and work plan elaboration with the highest-scoring proposal; and, (v) Implementation Partners' Agreement (IPA) signature.

VII. SUBMISSION PROCESS:

Applicants shall bear all costs related to proposal preparation and submission.

Applicants must submit their proposals via email to: wh-nature@unesco.org

Proposals should be submitted to the indicated email address only without copying (TO, CC or BCC) to any other e-mail addresses. Offers addressed at any other e-mail accounts will be disqualified.

Maximum size of single email: 20 MB - with the possibility to send several emails.

Any file sharing web tools such as G-drive, Dropbox or Wetransfer will NOT be accepted.

Maximum number of Email Transmissions: No maximum number

The following documents must be submitted in order for the submission to be considered:

- 1) Proposal documents (technical and financial, including project outline),
- 2) Budget annex using template in Annex 2 as reference,
- 3) Partners' Identification Form (duly filled in, with supporting documents),
- 4) Audited financial statements for past two years.

Only one submission per organization is allowed. Once the application is complete and submitted, revised versions of proposal documents will not be accepted.

Submission Deadline

Proposals, with supporting documents, should be submitted by 23:59 (Paris time) on 06/09/2026.

Note: UNESCO reserves the right not to fund any proposals arising from this Call for Partnerships. Depending on the value and context of the implementation partners agreement, the final financial report must be audited by the External Auditor of the Partner. The audit requirement will be confirmed during work plan elaboration and contract finalization.

Compliance to UNESCO general terms and conditions

Partners shall review and endorse UNESCO standard general terms and conditions of the Implementation Partner Agreement (IPA) to ensure that they comply with (Template Form 7-10 is provided for information in Annex 3).

Below is an estimated timeline for this Call for Partnerships:

14/08/2026: Call for Partnerships opens.

04/09/2026: Deadline for organizations to submit proposals under this Call.

11/09/2026: Assessment and selection processes will take place.

18/09/2026: Selected applicants will be notified.

IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

UNESCO requires that partners, bidders and their subcontractors adhere to the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct during the implementation of the partnership agreement and do not engage in corrupt and fraudulent practices.

United Nations Agencies have adopted a zero tolerance policy on gifts and, therefore, it is of overriding importance that UNESCO staff should not be placed in a position where their actions may constitute or could be reasonably perceived as reflecting favorable treatment of an individual or entity by accepting offers of gifts, hospitality or other similar favours. Partners are therefore requested not to send or offer gifts or hospitality to UNESCO personnel.

UNESCO will:

- (a) Reject a proposal to award an agreement if it determines that a partner recommended for award has engaged in fraud and/or corruption in competing for the agreement in question.
- (b) Cancel or terminate an agreement if it determines that a partner has engaged in fraud and/or corruption in competing for or in executing a UNESCO contract;
- (c) Declare a partner ineligible to become a “United Nations registered vendor”, either indefinitely or for a stated period of time, if it determines at any time that the partner has engaged in fraud and/or corruption in competing for or in executing a UNESCO agreement.

This Call for Partnerships is not to be construed in any way as an offer to contract with your organization. Your proposal could, however, form the basis for a contract between your organization and UNESCO.

You are requested to acknowledge the receipt of this Call for Partnerships and to indicate whether or not you will be submitting a proposal. For this purpose, and for any requests for clarification, please contact wh-unesco@unesco.org

For and on behalf of UNESCO

Culture Sector - World Heritage Centre
Natural Heritage Unit
Jyoti Hosagrahar, Chief of Section a.i.

VIII. ANNEXES:

Annex 1 - UNESCO Partner Identification form

Annex 2 - Budget template

Annex 3 - Implementation Partners' Agreement (example)