

2022



Environment and Peace Call for Proposals

Integrating Conflict Sensitivity
in Environmental Organisations

Concept note and
guidelines for applicants

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OUR CALL AT A GLANCE

We welcome applications from international organisations with an environmental, conservation, biodiversity protection or climate-focused mission for support to integrate conflict-sensitive approaches into their operations and organisational systems.

What is this Call about?

Environmental organisations are at the forefront of finding solutions to the triple planetary crisis we face of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. In doing so, they grapple with conflict issues and face risks to their staff, partners and communities with which they work. These organisations also have significant experience of bringing diverse stakeholders together to collaborate on managing, conserving and restoring natural resources. In a world where biodiversity and fragility hotspots increasingly overlap, conflict-sensitive approaches can be a game-changer to achieve environmental objectives in conflict contexts. They can help organisations pursue their mission while not inadvertently fuelling tensions and can also strengthen contributions to social cohesion and peace. We have extensive experience in providing support to building organisational capacity for conflict sensitivity, and with this Call are ready to extend it to more environmental organisations.

What are we offering?

Selected applicants will receive our process accompaniment and a small grant of up to 45,000 CHF to cover external expertise and process costs (for example for meetings, travel, communication). Our support may cover various aspects of conflict sensitivity integration, including but not limited to: building staff and partners' skills on dealing with conflict; piloting new approaches at programme level, notably on stakeholders' engagement or how to conduct and use conflict analysis; bringing a conflict lens into organisational policies and frameworks, such as environmental and social safeguards; developing guidance and support mechanisms for field teams dealing with conflict; and securing resources for environmental peacebuilding work. One phase of support lasts about one year. We typically provide our partners with up to two follow-on phases, pending progress.

Are you eligible?

Applicants need to have:

- **A primary mission related to the environment**, including conservation, biodiversity protection, the effective and equitable management of natural resources and/or climate action.
- **International reach**, defined as leading programmes in at least five different countries. Country offices within international organisations and networks are welcome to apply as long as they explain how they intend to share learning and incentivise conflict sensitivity uptake in their larger organisational set-up.
- **A footprint in conflict-affected contexts**, which may consist of situations of open violence, tensions between divided groups, or a history of conflict.

How to apply?

Applicants need to fill the following [application document](#) and complete a [general information webform](#).

The deadline for applications is **Tuesday 21st June 2022**.

We encourage you to read attentively the following concept note and guidelines. For any questions, you may contact Heloise Heyer, Conflict Sensitivity Lead: heloise.heyer@peacenexus.org.

ABOUT THE PEACENEXUS FOUNDATION



We are a private Swiss foundation that aims to strengthen the capacities of and collaboration between organisations to increase their contribution to reducing violence and building peace. Based across Switzerland, West Africa, Central Asia, South East Asia and the Western Balkans, our team of 20 provides organisational development, conflict sensitivity and business engagement support to influential local and international partners. Since our creation in 2009, we have accompanied a wide range of actors, from different sectors across civil society, government and business to build durable organisational capacity on conflict sensitivity.

Recognising the growing connections between environmental, climate and conflict dynamics, we have increased our investment in promoting conflict-sensitive conservation and environmental peacebuilding. Our collaboration with [Conservation International](#) (CI) started in 2019 to support their pioneering efforts on tackling conflict and peace as part of their mission to protect nature, global biodiversity and human well-being (see [partnership highlight](#)). We also partnered with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Germany and CI to produce a six-episode podcast series on [Voices for Peace and Conservation](#). Most recently, we helped steer the cross-sectoral development of a [White Paper on the Future of Environmental Peacebuilding](#), bringing together contributions from 150 authors representing 30 institutions and 84 countries.

Through this Call for proposals, we intend to select up to three new international environmental partners. In this note you will find information on:

- I. Our rationale for this Call
- II. Our offer and guidelines to applicants



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I. OUR RATIONALE FOR THIS CALL

Environment, climate and conflict dynamics increasingly interconnect

The world is facing an unprecedented environmental crisis with grave consequences for both nature and people. Climate change is accelerating much faster than anticipated, and a combination of biodiversity loss and pollution increasingly threatens livelihoods and the health of people, other species and entire ecosystems¹. The impacts of this “triple planetary crisis”² are already being felt in terms of population displacement, food insecurity and more frequent or more intense natural disasters as well as degradation of air, water and soil quality. These dynamics are hitting vulnerable groups the hardest, most notably indigenous communities, youth and women in contexts already struggling with conflict and weak coping mechanisms. While climate change as such does not directly cause conflict, its combined effects are leading to increased inequities and competition over natural resources, which drive insecurity and conflict³.

As the current war in Ukraine dramatically underscores, armed conflict can also harm biodiversity and have severe environmental consequences, including the risk of spreading radioactive materials and chemical pollutants into air, water and soil systems. Indirect effects are also widespread. For instance, areas affected by warfare are often hotspots of illegal or unregulated deforestation, hunting or mining.

In the midst of these challenges, the general public - particularly young people - are mobilising on climate and environmental issues like never before and demonstrating the value of collective action within and across societies.

Conflict and peace issues matter to environmental work and climate action

Environmental organisations play a critical role to address the triple planetary crisis we face. They engage with governments, multi-lateral agencies, indigenous and community groups, other non-profit actors and the private sector to lead research, advocacy, grant-making and operational programmes across the globe. In doing so, they grapple with conflict between divided groups much more often than is often acknowledged. Environmental organisations’ staff, partners and communities in which they work also face direct and mounting security risks. Environmental and land defenders are being increasingly targeted with 227 killed in 2020 alone – an average of more than four people a week⁴.

Being able to maintain and even scale up their environmental and climate programmes in conflict-affected contexts is more important than ever. Biodiversity and fragility hotspots increasingly overlap, and while societies at the frontline of fragility are bearing the brunt of the climate emergency, they are still the ones least able to access green and climate finance.

As environmental organisations strive to pursue their objectives in complex contexts, they also need to mitigate risks that their work may inadvertently fuel conflict. Declaring a protected area may displace a specific population group and aggravate land ownership disputes for example; or actors engaging in illegal logging, drug production or poaching may threaten local communities and environmental defenders.

1. IPCC (February 2022), *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Working Group II contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report

2. “The triple planetary crisis: Forging a new relationship between people and the earth”, speech of UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen, 14 July 2020

3. IPCC Ibid

4. Global Witness (2020), Last line of defence: The industries causing the climate crisis and attacks against land and environmental defenders, p. 12.

Protecting wildlife species through supporting rangers could inadvertently increase the risks of violence between rangers and local actors. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) showed, there is also “robust evidence that inequitable responses [to climate change] further exacerbate marginalisation, exclusion, or disenfranchisement of some populations, which are commonly recognized drivers of violent conflict”⁵.

Conversely, environmental work also offers powerful entry points to foster cooperation between divided groups and contribute to social cohesion and peace. For example, joint management and use of water resources, such as in transboundary river basins, can reduce inter-state tensions, promote cooperation between historically divided groups and enable better management of droughts and floods on both sides⁶. The IPCC also highlights how “adaptation can provide a common goal reaching across political differences and be a part of building political trust and local cooperation between alienated communities”⁷. The conservation sector can also build on its experience of engaging different stakeholders, notably from indigenous communities, to build mechanisms that manage natural resources and ecosystems and strengthen social cohesion and peace.

Conflict sensitivity can be a game-changer to reach environmental objectives in conflict contexts

The concept of conflict sensitivity is typically defined as the ability of an organisation to:

- Understand the context in which it operates;
- Understand the interactions between its actions and the context;
- Act upon this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict and peace.

While not always framed as “conflict sensitivity” or “environmental peacebuilding”, social issues related to conflict are being brought into work on the natural world. Some organisations are striving to integrate analysis of conflict risks and peace opportunities into their community-focused assessment tools. Others are focusing on inclusive stakeholder engagement processes to ensure just and informed conservation interventions. Increased attention is also given to developing safeguards to prevent risks of violence and abuse in conservation efforts.

Some global environment and conservation agencies are emphasising the importance of addressing conflict in their work. For example, in its first flagship report on Conflict and Conservation, the IUCN explores the complex relationships between nature and conflict to inform policies to better advance both peacebuilding and conservation⁸. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Independent Evaluation Office concluded that the GEF needed to put into practice a strong conflict-sensitive approach in its work because of the high volume of its grants in conflict contexts and risks that inadequate attention to context could jeopardise implementation⁹.

Yet in practice, many challenges remain for environmental organisations to build organisational capacity on conflict sensitivity. There is little funding or technical support to accompany such internal efforts, as financing and programming remain siloed between environmental and peacebuilding sectors. Where efforts on conflict sensitivity are being undertaken, they are typically ad hoc and at project level, with difficulty to embed them into organisational culture to sustain practice change over time. For example, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) mechanisms in the environmental sector still pay little attention

1. 5. IPCC *ibid*.

2. 6. *Blue Peace : Case studies of the blue peace approach*

3. 7. IPCC *ibid*.

4. 8. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/NGW-001-En.pdf>

5. 9. GEF (2020), *Evaluation of GEF support in fragile and conflict-affected situations*.

to process-related or people-focused results, such as whether cooperation has increased between communities or whether a conservation programme was able to effectively adapt to new conflict dynamics – even as these elements are critical to achieving environmental results.

At PeaceNexus, we believe that integrating conflict sensitivity across operations and organisational processes can be a game-changer and help reach and sustain results for nature, climate and people in conflict-affect contexts.

BENEFITS OF CONFLICT-SENSITIVE PRACTICE INCLUDE:

- Better programme design and more effective adaptation to context changes, preventing the breakdown of operations due to conflict;
- Improved security and risk mitigation for staff, partners and communities;
- Reduced risks that programmes inadvertently fuel tensions or violence;
- Stronger stakeholder engagement, notably from indigenous communities, youth and women, ensuring more sustainable results;
- Increased contribution to social cohesion and peace through environmental and climate work.



©Samuel Turpin | Media Active for Change, Displace women carry water cans in the Village of Sera, Burkina Faso.

II. OUR OFFER AND GUIDELINES TO APPLICANTS

What our support entails

We will provide selected partners with overall process accompaniment on conflict sensitivity integration and a small grant of up to 45,000 CHF to cover for external expertise and process-related costs, such as for meetings, travel and communication.

Please note that our grants do NOT cover operational project funding nor salaries.

The duration of a support phase is approximately one year. In our experience embedding conflict-sensitive practice requires sustained effort. We are committed to supporting our partners over time and therefore typically pursue our engagement through up to three phases of support.

PeaceNexus' contribution is more than financial. As an engaged partner our support includes facilitating the initial assessment stage and helping you set a vision for success and roadmap to get there. We then assist you on implementation and monitoring as needed, notably in helping recruit and manage suitable external expertise/accompaniment. Please see details on our conflict sensitivity support process in annex.

Our support may cover various aspects of conflict sensitivity integration, including but not limited to:

- Building staff and partners' skills on dealing with conflict;
- Piloting new approaches at programme level, which may be about how to use conflict analysis as part of programme design and M&E, improve stakeholder engagement, or test environmental peacebuilding methodologies;
- Creating spaces for exchange and cross-learning between field teams and/or other programmes on conflict and peace issues;
- Bringing a conflict sensitivity lens into organisational policies and frameworks, such as environmental and social safeguards, diversity and inclusion policies, human resources, ...;
- Developing tailored guidance, tools and support mechanisms to help field teams deal with conflict;
- Developing a funding strategy and donor engagement plan to secure increased resources for integrated environmental peacebuilding work.

For an example of the support we can provide, please see the [highlight](#) on our partnership with Conservation International.

Our conflict sensitivity partnership principles

Our partnership approach is demand-driven, participatory and based on mutual trust: we believe that change can only be successful if those expected to make it happen are actively involved in shaping it. We strive to create partnerships based on mutual trust and strict confidentiality, with regular communication, including on challenges encountered along the way. We:

- **Take an organisational development approach to conflict sensitivity integration.** We look at both programme and organisational factors that may limit or enable conflict-sensitive practice. We know that plans we agree on may be affected by unanticipated factors both internally and externally and enable adaptation along the way.
- **Start from where our partners are at.** We tailor our support to our partner's mission, challenges, existing strengths, and ambitions.
- **Recognise the risks and dilemmas inherent to working in conflict-affected contexts.** We work to ensure that conflict sensitivity enables work in high-risk contexts and does not lead to conflict avoidance.

Eligibility criteria

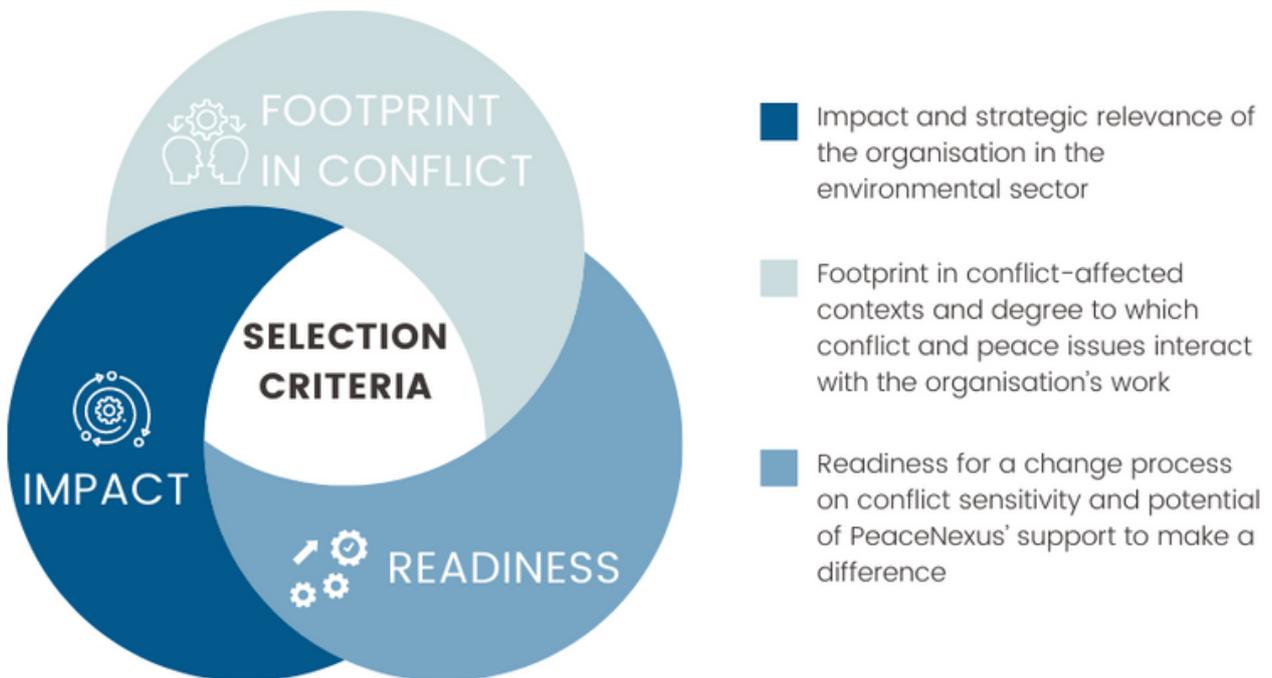
To be eligible for this Call, you need to have:

1. **A primary mission related to the environment**, including conservation, biodiversity protection, the effective and equitable management of natural resources and/or climate action.
2. **International reach**, defined as leading programmes in at least five different countries. Please note that country offices within international organisations and networks are welcome to apply as long as they explain how they intend to share learning and incentivise conflict sensitivity uptake in their larger organisational set-up. In that case, having another country or the international secretariat or head office co-submitting the application with you is a plus, but not a requirement.
3. **A footprint in conflict-affected contexts**, which may consist of situations of open violence, tensions between divided groups, or a history of conflict.

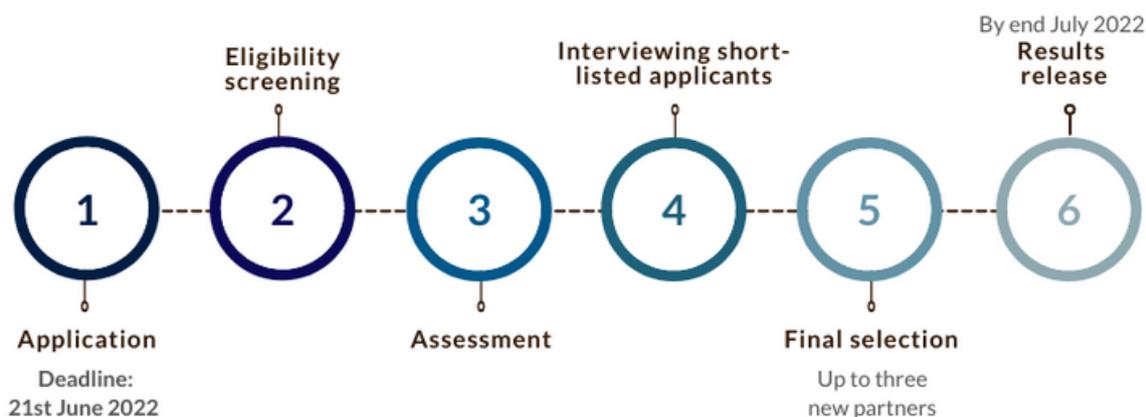
Additional criteria: due to legal constraints, we can only support activities that will not violate the USA PATRIOT Act (18 U. S. C. §2339B).

Selection criteria

All eligible applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria.



Selection steps



How to apply

- Please download and fill the following [application form](#). We encourage you to consult colleagues as part of your proposal design and framing.
- Once your application is finalised, please: 1) fill in the [general information webform](#); 2) upload your application document at the end of the webform; 3) upload up to 3 background documents that can help us better understand your organisation and content of your application.
- You will be able to pause and come back to filling the online webform, via a link that will be sent to you. Once you confirm the submission of your application, you will receive an automated confirmation of reception.
- Please note that only complete applications can be considered. You may submit your application in English or French.
- **The deadline for applications is Tuesday 21st June.**

For any technical question on the application process, please write to info@peacenexus.org. For other information on the Call or our larger conflict sensitivity work, please contact Heloise Heyer, Conflict Sensitivity Lead, at: heloise.heyer@peacenexus.org.

PeaceNexus Foundation

Conflict Sensitivity Support Process

