

2025



# Environment and Peace Call for International Partners

*Integrating conflict sensitivity in  
environmental organisations*

Concept note and guidelines for  
applicants

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Fondation PeaceNexus  
Route de Lausanne 107  
1197 Prangins, Switzerland

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+41 22 365 1500  
[info@peacenexus.org](mailto:info@peacenexus.org)  
[www.peacenexus.org](http://www.peacenexus.org)

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Héloïse Heyer  
Conflict Sensitivity Lead  
[heloise.heyer@peacenexus.org](mailto:heloise.heyer@peacenexus.org)

# OUR CALL AT A GLANCE

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*We welcome applications from international organisations with an environmental mission interested in integrating conflict-sensitive approaches in their operations and organisational systems.*

## **What is this call about?**

Environmental organisations play a central role in the fight against biodiversity loss and climate change. As they do so, they often encounter social tensions that impact their work, staff, partners and communities. Pursuing successful environmental action is especially challenging in areas where relationships between groups are strained or broken down, or where there is violence. At the same time, environmental work offers powerful entry points to foster collaboration across lines of division and contribute to social cohesion.

In a world where biodiversity, climate vulnerability and fragility hotspots increasingly overlap, the challenge of how to deal with conflict and peace issues as part of environmental work is unavoidable. We believe that conflict-sensitive approaches can help conservation and climate practitioners better understand and adapt to context shifts, prevent risks of fuelling tensions, and identify ways to contribute to peace through and in support of their environmental goals.

## **What are we offering?**

Through this Call, we aim to select up to four new international environmental partners. Our offer of support focuses on building institutional capacity for conflict sensitivity. Selected applicants will receive organisational accompaniment and a small grant of up to 50,000 CHF for one phase of support. We are committed to supporting partners over time and typically provide up to three phases of support.

The processes we accompany may include but are not limited to: building staff and partners' skills on dealing with conflict; piloting new approaches at programme level, notably on stakeholder engagement and how to use conflict analysis as part of environmental programming; bringing a conflict lens into organisational strategies and policies, such as environmental and social safeguards; developing guidance and support mechanisms for field teams dealing with conflict; or developing strategies for developing partnerships and mobilising resources for environmental peacebuilding work.

## **Are you eligible?**

Applicants need to have:

- A **primary mission related to the environment**, including nature conservation, biodiversity protection 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, if 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 groups, heightened polarisation or a history of armed conflict.

**Please note:**

- Organisations that are currently in partnership with PeaceNexus or that have completed a partnership with us in the last 3 years are **not eligible** for this call.
- Organisations that meet the eligibility criteria above and work predominantly in the Western Balkans, should apply to the currently open [Western Balkans Call](#) for proposals (conflict sensitivity strand of support, verifying they match the regional call eligibility criteria).
- Organisations that meet the eligibility criteria above and work in West and Central Africa, should apply to the currently open [West and Central Africa Environment and Peace Call for proposals](#) (in French or English, verifying they match the regional call eligibility criteria).

***How to apply?***

*Applicants need to fill the following [expression of interest form](#) and complete a general information webform through our [application portal](#). The deadline for applications is **Monday 16 February 2026 at midnight CET**.*

*We encourage you to read the following concept note and guidelines. For questions, you may contact Anina Uhlig, Senior Programme Officer at [anina.uhlig@peacenexus.org](mailto:anina.uhlig@peacenexus.org).*

*This Call is made possible by a collaboration between the PeaceNexus Foundation, the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation and the Somaha Foundation.*



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## About the PeaceNexus Foundation and our past work on environment and peace

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### List of past and current international environmental partners

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) - [see 0925 Resilient Africa Newsletter](#)

Conservation International (CI) - [see learning paper](#)

Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) - [see CS Green Growth Policy Brief](#)

Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) - [see highlight](#)

International Snow Leopard Trust (ISLT)

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - [see highlight](#)

Recognising the growing connections between environmental, climate and conflict dynamics, we have increased our investment in promoting conflict-sensitive conservation and environmental peacebuilding over the past five years. Since our first collaboration with Conservation International (CI) in 2019, we have developed in-depth bilateral partnerships with five more conservation and climate-focused organisations (see box above). We are also currently developing our conflict sensitivity support offer for local environmental actors in our focus regions (West Africa, Western Balkans, Central Asia and Southeast Asia).

At a collective level, we support peer-learning and influencing efforts through our engagement in the [Environment, Climate, Conflict and Peace \(ECCP\)](#) community of practice and in the [Environmental Peacebuilding Association](#) (EnPAX). Specific initiatives we have co-invested in, together with other contributors, include the [White Paper on the Future of Environmental Peacebuilding](#), the [Nature Footprints](#) art project and the [ECCP participatory Community Fund](#). Most recently in 2025, we led the development of an online course on [Conflict-Sensitive Conservation](#), through a collective process involving leading practitioners working at the intersection of environment and peace. This is hosted on the platform of the Academy of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and accessible for free.

Through this Call for proposals, we will select up to four new international environmental partners. We may offer candidates who submit high quality but unsuccessful applications the opportunity to participate in a collective learning initiative.

In this note you will find information on:

1. [Our rationale for this Call](#)
2. [Our offer and guidelines to applicants](#)



# I. Rationale

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## *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 ecosystems. These dynamics are hitting vulnerable groups the hardest, including youth and women, especially in contexts already facing polarisation, violent conflicts and weakened coping mechanisms.

As ongoing wars across the world dramatically underscore, armed conflict harms biodiversity and leads to severe environmental consequences. Natural resources can be exploited to directly fund warfare. Areas affected by conflict can also become hotspots of illegal or unregulated deforestation, hunting or mining.

Yet amid these challenges, civil society and 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 in addressing the converging environmental crises we face. They engage with governments, multi-lateral agencies, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, other non-profit actors and the private sector to lead operational programmes, research, advocacy and grant-making across the globe. In doing so, they grapple with conflict between groups much more often than is generally acknowledged. Environmental organisations' staff, partners and communities with whom they work face direct and mounting security risks. They also need to ensure their work does not inadvertently fuel tensions and risks of violence. For example, modalities for how to set up and manage protected areas, or the way in which rangers interact with local communities, will impact conflict and social cohesion dynamics including how communities perceive and engage with conservation work.

While challenging, being able to maintain and even scale up environmental and climate action in conflict-affected and polarised 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 have the least access to green and climate finance and support.

Environmental work also offers powerful entry points to foster cooperation between divided groups and contribute to social cohesion and peace. Joining forces around common environmental and climate goals can reduce tensions, promote cooperation between historically divided groups and enable better and more durable environmental outcomes. The conservation sector can also build on its deep experience of engaging different stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, to build mechanisms that manage natural resources and ecosystems and strengthen social cohesion and peace.

## How conflict sensitivity can help

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

- Understand the context in which it operates, in particular inter-group relationships;
- Understand how the organisation's work interacts with these dynamics, in positive and negative ways;
- Adapt its work in order to prevent risks of fuelling divisions and leverage opportunities to contribute to social cohesion and peace.

While not always framed as “conflict sensitivity” or “environmental peacebuilding”, social issues related to conflict are being brought into environmental action. Some conservation as well as climate-focused organisations have started bringing a stronger conflict lens into their work, notably in relation to social safeguards, community-based and rights-based approaches.

Recognition of the importance of conflict-sensitive conservation is gaining ground. For example, the IUCN has made this the focus of its 2021 flagship report on Conflict and Conservation and passed a motion on [Conflict-Sensitive Conservation](#) at its World Conservation Congress in October 2025. 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 implementation<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently, the GEF developed the [Guidance Note on Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations](#) (2024).

Yet in practice, many challenges remain for environmental organisations to adopt conflict-sensitive approaches. Funding and technical support on such issues are particularly scarce, as financing and expertise tend to remain siloed between the environmental and peacebuilding sectors, and organisational strengthening is hard to resource.

At the PeaceNexus Foundation, we believe that integrating conflict sensitivity within an organisation and into its ways of working can be a game changer to reach and sustain environmental results, particularly in conflict-affected and polarised contexts.

Some benefits of conflict-sensitive practice include:

- Fit-for-context programme design and more effective adaptation to shifting social and political dynamics, preventing the breakdown of operations due to instability and conflict;
- Stronger conflict lens within security and risk mitigation plans for staff, partners and communities;
- Reduced risks that programmes inadvertently fuel tensions or violence;
- Stronger stakeholder engagement, notably from Indigenous Peoples, local communities, youth and women, ensuring more sustainable results;
- Increased contribution to social cohesion and peace through environmental and climate work.

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<sup>1</sup> GEF (2020), *Evaluation of GEF support in fragile and conflict-affected situations*.

## II. Our offer and guidelines to applicants

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### *What our support entails*

**We will provide selected partners with overall process accompaniment on conflict sensitivity integration and a small grant of up to 50,000 CHF per phase of support. The grant can cover process-related costs, such as external expertise, meetings or travel. Please note that our grants do NOT cover operational project funding.**

The duration of a support phase is approximately one year. In our experience, embedding conflict-sensitive practice requires sustained effort. We therefore typically support our partners for up to three phases of support. Our 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 accompaniment. Please see details on our [conflict sensitivity support process](#) and examples on our [website](#).

Our support may cover various aspects of conflict sensitivity, 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 programming, strengthening stakeholder engagement, or testing concrete trust-building and dialogue methodologies as part of environmental action;
- Creating spaces for exchange and cross-learning across country teams on conflict, social cohesion and peace;
- Bringing a conflict sensitivity lens into organisational strategies and policies, such as environmental and social safeguards, inclusion policies, human resources, partnerships with local civil society;
- Developing tailored tools and support mechanisms to help field teams deal with conflict, social cohesion and peace dynamics;
- Developing a funding strategy to secure increased resources for integrated environmental peacebuilding work.

### *Our conflict sensitivity partnership principles*

Our **partnership approach is demand-driven, participatory and based on mutual trust**: we believe 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 across different types of context, including high-risk ones, and does not lead to conflict avoidance but rather enable responsible presence and greater impact.

## Eligibility criteria

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

- **A primary mission related to the environment**, including nature conservation, biodiversity protection 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, if 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 groups, heightened polarisation or a history of armed 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).

The organisations must:

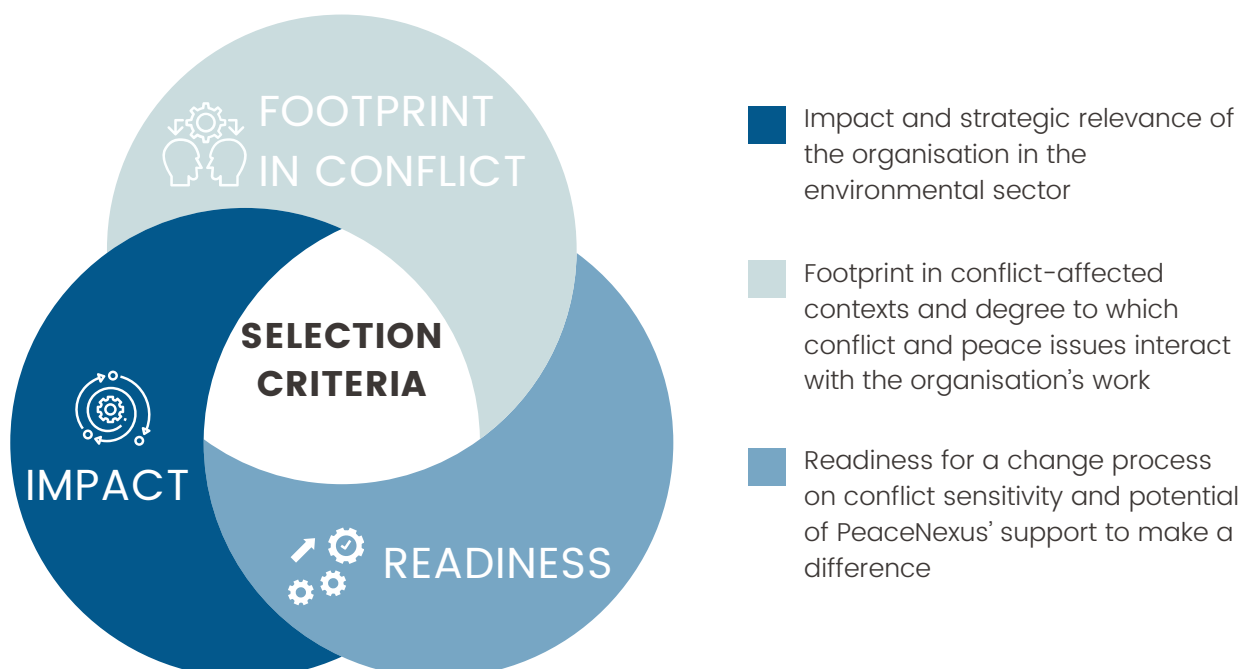
- have a bank account
- publish annual financial reports

### Please note:

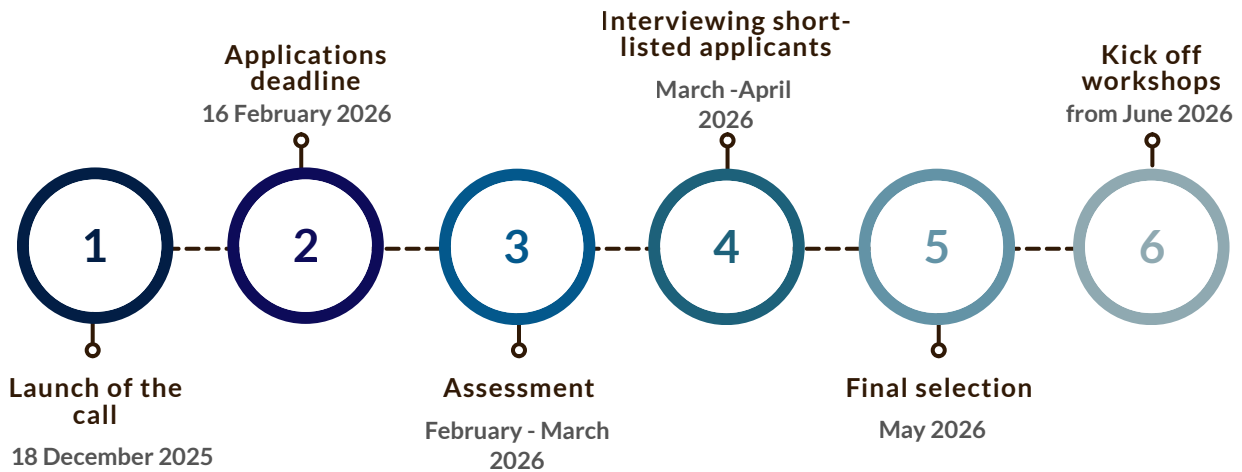
- Organisations that are currently in partnership with PeaceNexus or that have completed a partnership with us in the last 3 years are not eligible for this call.
- Organisations that meet the eligibility criteria above and work predominantly in the Western Balkans, should apply to the currently open [Western Balkans Call](#) for proposals (conflict sensitivity strand of support, verifying they match the regional call eligibility criteria).
- Organisations that meet the eligibility criteria above and work in West and Central Africa, should apply to the currently open [West and Central Africa Environment and Peace Call for proposals](#) (in French or English, verifying they match the regional call eligibility criteria).

## Selection criteria

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



## Selection steps



## How to apply

1. Please download and complete the [expression of interest form](#) (word format) (maximum 5 pages).
2. Open the [online questionnaire available on the application portal](#) and provide basic information about your organisation or network. Upload your completed application form as well as any additional supporting documents (doc, docx, ppt, or pdf).
3. At the end of the form, press “Submit.” You will see a message on the screen to confirm that your submission has been sent.

### Save Your Work

- Save draft – Click the “Save draft” button at any time (next to the “Submit” button). You will immediately receive an email containing your personal “Resume application” link.

Tip: For the best experience, use the same device and browser when returning to your draft.

### Please note:

- The application deadline is **16 February 2026 at 23:59 CET**.
- For any questions, please contact Anina Uhlig, Senior Programme Officer: [anina.uhlig@peacenexus.org](mailto:anina.uhlig@peacenexus.org).
- Only complete applications will be considered (in English or French).

We look forward to receiving your application!



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# PeaceNexus Foundation

## Conflict Sensitivity Support Process



- How do conflict issues affect your work? What pressing challenges do you face at operational and organisational levels?
- What are existing capacities and experiences on tackling conflict and peace? Where are the gaps?
- What are the entry points to address your priority challenges? What opportunities can be leveraged?

- What is your vision of success? What would change if you managed to address your priority challenges on conflict and peace?
- What are specific objectives for the process supported by PeaceNexus? Who needs to be involved and how? What type of accompaniment will you require?

- Implement the roadmap with internal leads and a cross-section of staff (and possibly partners), supported by external accompaniment and PeaceNexus
- Monitor the change process along key milestones, refine and adapt where needed.

- At the end of the support phase, review progress to date, challenges encountered and lessons learnt
- Agree follow-up actions to sustain your results
- Pending progress and continued relevance, decision on a possible follow-on support phase with PeaceNexus

