

## 2023 EAAFP Small Grant Fund Application Form

### Part A.

#### A. Personal Details of Applicant

**Title:** Mr Soe Min Htike Thura  
(Mr, Ms etc) Family name Given Name/s

**Institution:** Nature Conservation Society-Myanmar (NCS)  
**Institutional address:** Room 503, Building (7+1)D, Parami Condo, U Thin Pe Street, Hlaing Township, Yangon, Myanmar  
Street address or GPO Box

**Degree type:** Yangon Myanmar 11051  
Suburb or town State or country Postcode

+95-9-440223430 +95-9-978971900  
Primary contact number Mobile phone number

**Email address:** thurasoeminhtike@gmail.com

#### B. Relevant Working Group or Task Force Chair/Coordinator - DETAILS

Please contact the EAAFP Programme Officer if additional guidance is needed in relation to this section (programme@eaaflyway.net)

**Name of Working Group or Task Force:** Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force

**Title of Chair/Coordinator:** Dr. Zöckler Christoph  
(Mr, Ms etc) Family name Given Name/s

**Email address:** christoph.zoeckler@m-h-s.org

#### C. Eligibility of Projects

Please select "Yes" or "No" for each of the following questions:

- The focus of the project is migratory waterbirds and their habitats? Yes  No
- The project will improve the understanding of factors important for the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats in the EAAF? Yes  No
- The applicant agrees to provide a final report within 3 months of the completion of the project? Yes  No
- The applicant agrees to submit 1-2-page article and photographs for inclusion on EAAFP's website and/or write a brief article for the EAAFP's newsletter. Photographers will be acknowledged? Yes  No

- The applicant will acknowledge the support of the EAAFP in any publications, presentations and reports arising from this work? Yes ✓ No

## D. Project Details

**Project Title:** Please provide a concise and informative title of your entire project (not just the component for which funds are sought)

Conservation of Spoon-billed Sandpipers at the Gulf of Mottama, Myanmar in collaboration with local communities and promote eco-tourism

### Project Proposal:

**Details of your entire project (not just the component for which EAAFP funds are sought) (2.5 page maximum)**

**1. Objectives:** The overall aim of this project is to conserve the critically endangered Spoon-billed Sandpipers and other migratory waterbirds in their well-known wintering site in Southeast Asia, for the Gulf of Mottama by monitoring the wintering population and strengthening the capacities of local community bird-watching tourism. To fulfill the overall aim, the following objectives will be set up;

- To build the capacities of local communities related to bird watching ecotourism and being a good citizen science and local bird guide
- To conduct the monthly migratory shorebirds population surveys in the Gulf of Mottama from October 2023 to January 2024
- To understand the update the annual wintering population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers in Gulf of Mottama, and it contribute for global population estimate

**2. Background:** Gulf of Mottama(GoM), one of the six flyway network sites in Myanmar, was also designated as a Ramsar Site since 2017. This area supports a large number of species including marine fish, invertebrates and up to 150,000 migratory waterbirds especially during the non-breeding season. The migratory waterbirds include 12 globally threatened species including perhaps 60% of global population of the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpipers. GoM also support the various livelihoods for the thousands of people by providing fish for local and regional consumption.

Conserving the ecosystem by improving the local livelihoods or generating their alternative income is very critical for long-term conservation programme and sustainability of incredible wetlands and many species relied on it. GoM is a unique habitat which is home for thousands of migratory waterbirds and attracting both international and local scientists and bird watchers to explore the most diverse migratory waterbird species and their large populations. In GoM, fishing communities can get extra income from boat transport for bird watchers and researchers to the vast intertidal mudflat area in Southeast Asia.

NCS-Myanmar, with the support of EAAFP secretariat, has been working conservation activities of migratory shorebirds in Gulf of Mottama especially implementing CEPA activities such as WMBD and WWD events, educative talks and capacity building. While we have tried to raise the awareness and build the capacities of local communities in conserving wetlands and its biodiversity in recent years, we will try to educate members of Local Conservation Group(LCG) in the field of ecotourism and being good local guides during this project. A shallow-draft boat will be supplied to the LCG so that they could use it for transporting birdwatchers and researchers to GoM and generate alternative income and it can be used for regular shore birds monitoring by LCGs team.

The Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Calidris pygmaea*) is a long-distance migrant, breeding on the coastal tundra of far eastern Russia, and migrating 8,000 km south along the East-Asian Australasian Flyway, including key staging posts in the Yellow Sea. This species winters on intertidal mudflats in South and South-east Asia, particularly Myanmar, China, and Bangladesh. The Spoon-Billed Sandpiper is categorized as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. In 2010, it was assessed that the global population of this species was declining by 26% per year, with a global population estimate of approximately 100 pairs (Zockler et al. 2010). The recent publications also estimate its global population between 661 -718 individuals (Clark et al. 2018) and 773 individuals (95% C.L. 569–978) (Green et al. 2021)

While GoM is a place with the largest known wintering population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers, the wintering population there is declining by about half, from 244 to 112 individuals between 2009 and 2016(Aung et al. 2020). These changes has still declining to 80 individuals in 2022(Aung et al.

2022 unpublished report). So, it is very important to monitor the wintering population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers to know its last remaining population trend and to support estimating its global population size. During this project, we will try to monitor the annual wintering population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers and other threatened species in GoM in cooperation with local community.

**3. Project plan, timeline and methods:**

*Please include the proposed timing of project commencement, start and completion of fieldwork (if applicable), project completion. Please also comment on the flexibility of the timeline of the project.*

**Timeline**

Training on ecotourism and tour guide will be provided to the members of Local Conservation Group (LCG) in September 2023.

Monthly population surveys will be conducted from October 2023 to January 2024.

**Methodology**

Two-days basic course on ecotourism and tour guide will be provided to the members of LCG and keen youth from the villages near GoM. The course package includes the foundation of ecotourism, bird-watching tourism, basic home stay services, and hospitality ethics of a tour guide. This training will be the very first training on ecotourism and tour guide for LCG members in GoM and will contribute to the development of bird-watching tours for GoM.

Monitoring the population of Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other wintering waterbirds at the Gulf of Mottama will be conducted monthly and LCG members will participate in the surveys. Estimating the population based on the proportion of Spoon-billed Sandpipers in the scanned flocks will be applied.

Practical training on ecotourism and tour guides for LCG members will also be conducted with the monthly population survey and will evaluate the capacity of LCGs in the next wintering survey 2024.

**4. Likely benefit to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitat / or key research outputs:**

*In addressing this question, please also identify which EAAFP Key Result Areas the project will contribute to (see the EAAFP Strategic Plan 2019 – 2028).*

**KRA 2.1 The achievement of the elements in the EAAFP CEPA Action Plan (2019- 2024).**

This project will produce IEC materials and will contribute to increase the awareness of local communities on the benefit of wetland ecosystems and migratory waterbirds in their socio-economic and environment sectors. The training will also contribute to achieve the objective of CEPA action plan by promoting the awareness of local communities on the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitat.

**KRA 3.1 National monitoring systems to assess the status of migratory waterbirds and their habitats are established, maintained and further enhanced.**

This project would contribute to annual monitoring on waterbirds population in GoM, and will also contribute to know the annually wintering population of threatened shorebirds species. These monitoring surveys will be conducted by local and international bird watchers, and Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force will assist technical support.

**KRA 3.2 Conservation status reviews for waterbird populations are produced and updated to set and adapt priorities for action.**

This project will produce reports with the facts and figures of the monthly population surveys and an estimate of the wintering population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers and other threatened birds. This report will include wintering population trend of Spoon-billed Sandpipers in GoM over the last decade.

**KRA 3.3 Updated list of sites of international importance for migratory waterbirds for conservation management and prioritization.**

This project will update the situation of GoM, the most critical area with the largest known wintering population size of Spoon-billed Sandpipers along the coastal areas of Southeast Asia.

**5. Alignment with EAAFP Working Groups and Task Forces priorities:**

*Please indicate which of the EAAFP Working Groups and Task Forces priorities are addressed in this project.*

This project will fulfill the objective of Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force to coordinate the conservation activities of Spoon-billed Sandpipers by

- monitoring and research activities of the species population and ecology
- securing the Spoon-billed Sandpiper's key wintering site and increasing the awareness of local communities
- engaging local communities through capacity-building training on ecotourism and tour guide

<p><b>6. Explain the part of your project for which you are seeking EAAFP funds in this Application</b> (provide details in the Project Budget section below):</p>	<p>Gulf of Mottama is a well-known key wintering site of Spoon-billed Sandpipers in Myanmar and need to monitoring annual the wintering population size which can help the estimate the global population of Spoon-billed Sandpiper and to prioritize the further necessary actions for the local and flyway level.</p> <p>Capacity building on ecotourism and tour guides would be useful for the members of Local Conservation Group(LCG) in contributing to the bird watching tourism in GoM and increasing the awareness on the importance of migratory waterbirds and their habitat.</p>
<p><b>7. Scientific References cited in the Application:</b></p>	<p>Aung, P.P., Moses, S., Clark, N.A., Anderson, G.Q., Hilton, G.M., Buchanan, G.M., Zöckler, C. and Green, R.E., 2020. <b>Recent changes in the number of spoon-billed sandpipers <i>Calidris pygmaea</i> wintering on the Upper Gulf of Mottama in Myanmar.</b> <i>Oryx</i>, 54(1), pp.23-29.</p> <p>Aung et al. 2022. <b>MONITORING OF MIGRATORY SHOREBIRDS AT KEY COASTAL SITES (NANTHAR ISLAND, IRRAWADDY DELTA, GULF OF MOTTAMA AND TANINTHARYI.</b> Unpublished report.</p> <p>Clark, N.A., Anderson, G.Q., Li, J., Syroechkovskiy, E.E., Tomkovich, P.S., Zöckler, C., Lee, R. and Green, R.E., 2018. <b>First formal estimate of the world population of the Critically Endangered spoon-billed sandpiper <i>Calidris pygmaea</i>.</b> <i>Oryx</i>, 52(1), pp.137-146.</p> <p>Green, R., Syroechkovskiy, E.E., Anderson, G.Q., Chang, Q., Chowdhury, S., Clark, J.A., Foysal, M., Gerasimov, Y., Hughes, B., Kelly, C. and Lappo, E., 2021. <b>New estimates of the size and trend of the world population of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper using three independent statistical models.</b></p> <p>Zoeckler, C., Syroechkovskiy, E.E. and Atkinson, P.W., 2010. <b>Rapid and continued population decline in the Spoon-billed Sandpiper <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmeus</i> indicates imminent extinction unless conservation action is taken.</b> <i>Bird Conservation International</i>, 20(2), pp.95-111.</p>
<p><b>8. How will any continuing COVID restrictions be managed for project delivery?:</b></p>	<p>Rules and procedures by Ministry of Health and Sports of Union of Myanmar will be followed during the project. All activities with a crowd of people will be held with the rule of social distancing.</p>

**Part B. FOR CONFERENCE APPLICANTS ONLY**

(For Task Force or Working Group members delivering their own work as a presentation, paper or poster)

Conference Title:	Location:	Date:
<p><b>Presentation Abstract</b> (250 word maximum):</p>		

**Part C. FOR ALL APPLICANTS**

**Experience Relevant to Project:**

<p><i>0.5 page maximum</i></p> <p>Nature Conservation Society-Myanmar (NCS), the recognised National Partner of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper Task Force, is well experienced in waterbird monitoring, research, and capacity building for local communities. NCS is also conducting the annual surveys on wintering population of migratory shorebirds in the key wintering sites along the coastal areas of Myanmar. NCS was also taking part in the international cooperated activities such as Spoon-billed Sandpipers census in Thailand this winter in December 2022. NCS is supporting the national government in developing the CEPA national action plan, as key partner related to migratory bird conservation and Wetlands conservation in Myanmar. Moreover, NCS has experiences on advocacy and local stakeholders' engagement and the development of LCGs in Gulf of Mottama and Nanthar Island for Ramsar Site designation and management.</p>
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Please **also** attach a maximum 2-page CV or list non-academic research experience and experience with migratory waterbirds/conservation e.g. work experience, volunteer experience, bird banding, birdwatching.

**E. Project Budget** (please outline costs of your entire project, not just the component(s) for which funds are being sought from EAAFP)

Item (Please list)	Budget (USD)	Co-funding acquired (source and amount in USD)	Co-funding applied for (source and amount in USD)	Support requested from EAAFP (USD)
Equipment: (details) Shallow-drafted bird-watching boat and Engine (1 item)	1500		700	800
Consumable items (details) Monthly shorebirds population surveys (4 Persons x 6 days x 4 months x 30 USD = 2880 USD)  Refreshments and lunch for participants in training (10 persons x 2 days x 20 USD = 400 USD)	3280		300	2980
Travel and accommodation (details) Boats/ vehicles and accommodation during Monthly shorebirds population surveys (4 times x 300 USD = 1200 USD)	1200			1200
Computing & clerical (details) Producing training materials and pamphlets	300		300	
Other (details) Organising meetings on tourism management committee(2 x 200 USD)	200		200	
<b>Total amount requested from EAAFP Small Grants Fund:</b> (in USD)				4980

**Budget justification:** Please provide brief description and justification of all major budgetary items requested, indicating any that are essential to the project and/or conference for which you are applying (250 word maximum):

Providing the boat for local conservation group(LCG) will be useful for them to transport birdwatchers and researchers to GoM mudflat areas and will enable them to generate alternative income. The boat will also be useful for shorebirds population surveys and patrolling in GoM. Moreover, keep long time relationships with Local communities and LCGs members for the securing of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and other migratory birds and its habitats by the collection of local knowledge and information.

## F. Declaration

I have discussed the contents of this Application with the relevant Chair/s and Coordinator/s of relevant Working Group and/or Task Forces and I certify that to the best of my knowledge all documentation and information submitted or made available by me is true, accurate and complete.

By ticking the box you are agreeing to the above statement:

## G. Application Checklist

All relevant sections of this Application have been completed.	Yes ✓	No
Full payment details have been provided on the final page.	Yes ✓	No
Application is being submitted electronically as one single document.	Yes ✓	No
Application is being submitted in MS Word format.	Yes ✓	No
Application has been discussed with the relevant Chair/s and Coordinator/s of relevant working Group and/or Task Forces and these have been carbon copied (cc) to this application submission as evidence they have seen and approved this Application.	Yes ✓	No

Applications that do not comply with these guidelines will be returned to the applicant.

## Application Submission

Please email your Application as a single document to:  
[secretariat@eaaflyway.net](mailto:secretariat@eaaflyway.net)

EAAFP will acknowledge the receipt of your Application.

**Applications close at 5pm (KST) on 6 February 2023**  
**Results will be announced on 7 March 2023 on EAAFP Webpage and via email**

### OFFICE USE ONLY:

Decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorised:                    \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

Entered:                        \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Investigator Advised:                    \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE COMPLETE PAYMENT DETAILS ON FINAL PAGE**

## PAYMENT DETAILS

To ensure prompt payment of successful applications please complete the following details and submit with your Application.

### PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD

Electronic funds transfer (EFT)

### GRANT CONDITIONS

**In accordance with the application criteria, the following conditions must be met:**

- Funds are to be strictly exempt from organisational administration charges.
- You are required to submit one copy by email of the final report within 3 months of the completion of the project.
- You are required to acknowledge the EAAFP and the Small Grant Fund in any presentations, publications, reports or promotional material arising from this work. Please email [secretariat@eaaflyway.net](mailto:secretariat@eaaflyway.net) in order to obtain an electronic copy of EAAFP logo for use on any display material you will be preparing.
- You may be requested to write a brief article for the EAAFP newsletter.
- You are required to provide EAAFP with an electronic copy of your final report at the completion of your project, as well as a copy of any publications that result from your grant.