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Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF): Advancing Circular Economy (ACE) Facility

Call for Proposals (CfPs) 2

Questions & Answers Document

This Questions & Answers (Q&A) document consolidates all written queries received from applicants under the Second Call for Proposals (CfP2) of the Advancing Circular Economy (ACE) Facility, along with the responses provided by the CBF Secretariat.

The Q&A document is shared publicly to ensure transparency and equal access to information among all potential applicants. Questions are grouped by theme where relevant and reflect clarifications submitted up to October 31, 2025, in accordance with the published CfP2 timeline.

Disclaimer: Responses provided in this Q&A Document are intended solely to clarify the requirements, eligibility criteria, and submission procedures of CfP2. They do not alter or supersede the official CfP2 Guidelines or any other governing documents of the ACE Facility.

Section 1: Eligibility

- **Question:** Can these countries apply under the ACE Facility's second call for proposals? - St. Kitts and Nevis, Cayman Islands, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Martinique, Antigua and Barbuda, Curaçao, Suriname, Guyana, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Tanzania, Cameroon, Jordan, Pakistan, South Korea and Colombia.
 - **Answer:** The geographical focus of the ACE Facility is currently on the insular Caribbean which focuses on nine (9) countries - Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. These countries are directly eligible for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), as identified by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC).
- **Question:** Is it possible for an institution which is not located in the Caribbean region to directly apply as the lead applicant for this grant call?
 - **Answer:** Institutions based outside the Caribbean may apply; however, they are required to partner with at least one local organisation registered in each of the project intervention countries. The lead applicant should preferably be a Caribbean-based organisation with registration to operate in the region and, ideally, in the designated project country.
- **Question:** Are UN organizations are eligible to apply?
 - **Answer:** Regional (Caribbean-based) intergovernmental organisations are eligible. However, UN agencies are not eligible for direct funding and are required to partner with other agencies that can feasibly absorb the role of the lead grantee.
- **Question:** Is it possible to apply through a university?
 - **Answer:** Yes, academic institutions are considered eligible organizations under the ACE Facility.
- **Question:** Please confirm whether the call is restricted only to organizations based in the Caribbean region, or if organizations from other ODA-qualified countries (such as Cameroon) may apply?
 - **Answer:** We confirm that the geographical focus of this call is geared towards the Caribbean countries listed in the guidance. We also wish to reiterate that entities from outside the region are eligible to apply for and execute projects in any of the nine eligible countries. However, the existence of local partnerships with organisations based in the beneficiary countries must be demonstrated.

Section 2: Partnerships and Consortia

- **Question:** Can projects involving multiple countries be submitted via one Concept Note or would each country be required to submit their individual concept note for the same project?
 - **Answer:** If the project involves multiple Caribbean countries, it is not necessary to submit separate Concept Notes for each. A single Concept Note can be submitted for the regional project, provided it clearly outlines the multi-country approach, identifies local partners in each participating country, and demonstrates coordinated implementation.
- **Question:** Can I apply jointly with another organization for a circular economy project? One organization is based in Cuba.
 - **Answer:** Regional/sub-regional projects involving any of the nine eligible project countries can be submitted. Please note that a lead applicant organisation must be indicated. We also wish to highlight requirements for applications that involve Cuba. Applications that include Cuba will only be accepted from institutions that have experience in implementing projects and other activities in compliance with US Government sanctions and regulations concerning Cuba. Applicants must include documentation that demonstrates such experience as well as any additional evidence that provides information on internal systems in place to ensure compliance.
- **Question:** Several research groups from our organization are interested in submitting concept notes. Can several concept notes be submitted from the same institution (but different authors, groups, areas)? Can our organization also submit as part of a larger conglomerate with an individual submission as well?
 - **Answer:** There are no limits on the number of concept notes that an organisation can submit. There are no limitations on the number of consortium partnerships that can be formulated on separate submissions from an organisation.
- **Question:** Is it possible to change the consortium between the concept note phase & full proposal phase?
 - **Answer:** Consortium members can be changed; however, this must be justified by completing the requisite form at the Full Proposal Phase.

Section 3: Focus Areas and Activities

- **Question:** Are the following types of projects/ waste streams eligible for funding? – cooking oils, fish waste, coconut waste, wastewater treatment projects, wastewater,

carbon sequestration, reduction of sargassum, indoor agriculture, aquaculture, greenhouses, turning plastic bottles into artificial wools, restoring degraded ecosystems using nature-based solutions.

- **Answer:** At present, the scope of the ACE Facility focuses primarily on solid waste management within the circular economy framework.

The ACE Facility may give preferential treatment to projects that focus on marine waste prevention, minimization, and removal in the following waste streams and sectors:

- Abandoned, lost, or other discarded fishing gear (ALDFG).
 - Agricultural Plastics.
 - Personal Care and Cosmetics Industry (Plastic Packaging).
 - Synthetic Textiles.
 - Transport Sector (solid waste components).
 - Medical Waste Articles.
 - Marine Transport Industry.
 - Disaster Debris Management.
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- **Question:** Does it matter whether the waste is generated far from the coast or near the ocean?
 - **Answer:** The point source of waste generation is not a limiting factor.
 - **Question:** What is the recommended methodology to estimate waste prevented/removed?
 - **Answer:** The logical framework (available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#)), outlines indicators that can be selected based on your project at this stage. At the full proposal stage, applicants will be provided with additional documents to support further elaboration of indicators, targets and methodologies, such as the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan (indicators) & MEL Guidelines (methodologies).

Section 4: Administrative Requirements & Documents

- **Question:** The RFP states that awardees must have a separate bank account for grant funds. Our organization currently uses a successful system with government and multilateral funders. Will this be sufficient for this grant?
 - **Answer:** Please include a justification to waive (with supporting evidence) the requirement for a designated bank account for consideration by the Selection Committee.

- **Question:** The RFP states that grantees must have the project independently audited annually by external auditors. Will our organization's routine annual audit be acceptable to meet this requirement? If we must have this project separately audited, what, if anything, do we need to budget for this?
 - **Answer:** Project audits are required. An allocation for auditing may be included under the administrative costs. This will be further streamlined should you advance to the Full Proposal Phase.

- **Question:** The call for proposals documents state that applicants must submit, as an attachment to the Concept Note, a "certificate of registration of the applicant organization and demonstration of local partnerships for each project intervention country, or evidence to operate in the project intervention country(ies)." Can you please clarify if "evidence to operate" can substitute for a "certificate of registration" if an applicant organization does not have active registration in a country included within the geographic range of this call?
 - **Answer:** Please provide the certificate of registration for the country in which your organisation is registered, as well as evidence to operate in the project country/ies in which the project will have interventions.

- **Question:** Can you please clarify what "evidence to operate" entails, and specifically what information is required to provide sufficient evidence?
 - **Answer:** Evidence to operate in a country may include registration documents, memoranda of understanding or letters of agreement with national organisations, or other similar documents.

- **Question:** Does the requirement to provide this information apply to organizations acting as consortia members (not leading the proposed project)?
 - **Answer:** At least one of the consortia members who will be spearheading project interventions with a project country must have evidence to operate in that particular country.

- **Question:** Our partner, an international organization, is not yet registered to operate in the project country, but our local partner is already registered. Would this affect our submission?
 - **Answer:** This would be accepted once the local partner is registered

Section 5: Budget and Co-Financing

- **Question:** Is there a cap on administrative/overhead costs?
 - **Answer:** We encourage applicants to demonstrate their most cost-effective budget in alignment with impactful project design. The acceptable max for Project Management is usually 20% and the range for overheads is typically between 5% and 15%. It's important to note that the final decision on the approved percentage always rests with the evaluation committee during the full proposal review. This will be further streamlined should you advance to the Full Proposal Phase.
- **Question:** Are there any requirements/limitations on what we can count toward our in-kind contribution as an NGO? What documentation will be required to show the in-kind contributions?
 - **Answer:** We ask that you comply with the requirements outlined in the concept note guidance. In-kind contributions can include technical assistance; equipment, materials and services; human resources; infrastructure and facilities. Additional guidance on requirements and documentation will be provided should you advance to the Full Proposal Phase.
- **Question:** Do staff need to record actual hours worked on this project?
 - **Answer:** The allocation of staff time towards the project will be streamlined at the Full Proposal Phase.
- **Question:** If the request amount is the minimum grant value of USD \$400,000, could you confirm whether both the cash and in-kind co-financing must be equivalent to USD \$200,000, making the total project value USD \$800,000?
 - **Answer:** In the case where the lead organisation is a for-profit entity (small or medium enterprise) or regional organisation, this calculation for the co-financing structure is correct, that is, 25% in-kind + 25% cash co-financing of the total project value of USD 800,000.
- **Question:** Please advise whether the grant funds are disbursed as a lump sum or in phases. If phased, I would be grateful if you could share the approximate percentage allocations and timelines for each disbursement.
 - **Answer:** The grant funds are disbursed in phases, the first two disbursements are made at three-month intervals and subsequently, every six months. However, there are no pre-determined percentages as the disbursements in accordance with the grantees' requests, which are determined against their workplans.

- **Question:** We would like to confirm what is the classification of our organization and the percentage of co-financing that would be required based on this classification.
 - **Answer:** The classification of your organisation must be aligned with the organisation type stated on the legal registration certificates. Thus, you are required to fulfil the co-financing requirements associated with the organisation type as per the legal registration certificate.
- **Question:** What percentage and type (cash/in-kind) of co-financing is required, when applying as an international NGO?
 - **Answer:** Please review the co-financing requirements in section 9 of our Terms and Conditions document [here](#).
- **Question:** Which co-financing threshold will be applicable in a consortium?
 - **Answer:** The co-financing threshold depends on the lead organization.
- **Question:** Does the co-financing amount have to be provided by the lead applicant only?
 - **Answer:** Cofinancing can be provided by any member organisation from the consortia.

Section 6: Previously Awarded Projects

- **Question:** Can you provide information regarding the awards made in Round 1 (awardees, projects, amounts)?
 - **Answer:** This information is not authorized for public disclosure at this time.

Section 7: Access to Materials and Recordings

- **Question:** Where can I access the recording and presentation from the Launch and Technical Webinar?
 - **Answer:** You can access the recording of the Technical Webinar and a copy of the presentation slides under the “Resources” section on our main Call for Proposals webpage [HERE](#).
- **Question:** Please provide us with the official Concept Note template in Spanish, the Guidelines for Submitting Concept Notes (if available in Spanish), and any additional information or links relevant to the application process and eligibility criteria.
 - **Answer:** Information on eligibility, scope, submission deadlines, and proposal submission procedures is available on the ACE CfP2 webpage [HERE](#). This page also provides access to the Concept Note Template (available in [English](#),

[Spanish](#) and [French](#)), Guidelines for Submission (available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#)), and other relevant details for applicants.