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

Call for Proposals (CfPs) 2

Questions & Answers Document (Updated 12.11.2025)

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 November 21, 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, Colombia, Honduras, Nigeria and Peru.
 - 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.

- Question: Some of the project experimentation will require equipment and facilities that are not available in the 9 targeted countries but are available in countries outside of this. Can part of the technical experimentation be done in these external facilities?
 - Answer: The eligible project intervention countries are: Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Funding cannot be disbursed to operations in any other countries.
- Question: If the applicant is a public institution, is there any specific eligibility or procedural considerations that differ from those applicable to other types of organizations (e.g., NGOs or private entities)?
 - Answer: The only procedural difference for public institutions relates to audited financial statements. In cases where updated approved audited financial statements are not available, or separate institutional audits are not produced, government entities may provide draft audited financial statements, management accounts or parent ministry financial audits. These documents will be considered in lieu of formal institutional audits during the application review.
- Question: Would a regional intergovernmental organization be considered a regional NGO?
 - Answer: A regional intergovernmental organization would be categorized as a regional organisation for the purposes of the Call and should follow the corresponding eligibility and co-financing requirements.
- Question: Would ship recycling initiatives be considered eligible under circular economy projects?
 - Answer: The ACE Facility gives consideration to projects that address marine waste prevention, minimization, or removal within specific sectors, including the marine transport industry.
- Question: Would a pilot or smaller-scale project be eligible under this program; or is a broader partnership recommended to reach the minimum budget range?
 - Answer: The minimum project budget for ACE funding is USD 400,000 and the duration is maximum 3 years. This ensures that funded initiatives can

achieve meaningful impact, demonstrate regional learning, and support the necessary scale of interventions aligned with the Facility's objectives.

- Question: Would the ACE Facility consider a multi-agency project led by a national government department with two subcontracting partners — one being a regional research institution and the other a community-based as eligible under this call?
 - Answer: Government agencies and public institutions are eligible to apply for ACE funding. Lead applicants are free to determine the composition of the project consortium. The roles and responsibilities of each partner should be clearly identified and justified in the application.

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.
- Question: Regarding the criteria for the Applicant Organisational Criteria, do the experience, track record, principles and regulatory presentations count for the applicant organisation only, or is the accumulated experience of all members of the consortium evaluated?
 - Answer: In assessing the Applicant Organisational Criteria, the experience and track record of all consortium members are taken into account, particularly in relation to the specific roles they will play within the project. While the lead applicant's capacity remains central, the combined expertise of the consortium is also considered during the evaluation.
- Question: Does the local partner have to be an organisation, or can it be an individual?
 - Answer: For the purposes of the ACE Facility, the local partner must be an organisation or entity that is duly registered in the country where the project will be implemented and therefore able to legally operate there.
- Question: Is there a limit to the number of members permitted in a consortium of applicants?
 - Answer: There is no limit to the number of consortium members permitted. Applicants may include as many partners as needed, as long as the roles are clear and aligned with project objectives
- Question: The call requests demonstration of local partnerships for each project intervention country. In our case, our Member Organisations serve as our local partners. Could you advise if specific documentation is required to demonstrate these relationships?

- Answer: Each project intervention country must include at least one local partner that is an organisation or entity legally registered in that country. Applicants will need to provide documentation confirming the legal registration of their local partners in the respective countries. This may include Certificate of Incorporation, Business License or Trade License, Tax Registration, Foreign Investment Approval (if applicable) or Proof of Local Partnerships or Subsidiaries or equivalent legal documentation.
- Question: Can a non-SME private sector entity participate outside the consortium as co-financers?
 - Answer: A non-SME private sector entity cannot serve as the lead applicant, but it may still participate in the project in other ways. Specifically:
 - They may provide co-financing (cash or in-kind), even if they are not part of the consortium.
 - They may also participate as a technical partner or beneficiary, provided they are not the lead applicant and do not receive ACE funding directly.

Consortium membership is optional for co-financers; they may contribute outside the consortium structure if preferred.
- Question: Is it possible to submit more than one proposal?
 - Answer: There is no limit on the number of concept notes that can be submitted by a single organization.
- Question: Do we require formal agreements with local authorities?
 - Answer: Formal agreements with local authorities or letters of support are required where their permission is a legal prerequisite for project activities.
- Question: Are community-led waste management structures (e.g., committees, cooperatives) required or recommended?
 - Answer: Community-led waste management structures are eligible and encouraged, particularly for interventions that rely on local participation.

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, mangrove conservation, coastal ecosystem protection, development of green micro-enterprises, links between circular economy and climate resilience.
 - 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.

Please refer to [ACE Facility Terms and Conditions](#) for Funding for our project eligibility and project design preferences

- 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).

- Question: Would you prefer that we report solely against the indicators in the ACE Facility Logframe, or is it acceptable to include a small number of project-specific indicators alongside the ACE indicators?
 - Answer: It is acceptable to include a small number of project-specific indicators alongside the ACE Facility Logical Framework indicators.
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- Question: When it comes to the level of quantification, is your expectation at this stage to receive indicative figures with the corresponding assumptions, or would you prefer more detailed estimations?
 - Answer: The level of quantification at this stage should be indicative. You may provide rough estimates, while more detailed data will be required at the Full Proposal stage. At the Concept Note stage, your submission should identify relevant indicators and estimated targets that are meaningful for your project.
- Question: Do we need to provide stratified reporting for each type of solid waste material that we target in our project?
- Regarding methodologies, for mixed interventions, is there any preferred methodology, tool, set of coefficients, or reference project you would like us to follow?
- As some of the data for our project area will need to be consolidated with our partners during project preparation, would it be acceptable to provide conservative baselines with explicit assumptions at the Concept Note stage, indicating that these will be validated and refined should we be invited to submit a full proposal?
- On the socio-economic, gender and capacity-building effects, would you prefer quantified targets already or is a qualitative description of the intended monitoring and evaluation approach sufficient at this point?
 - Answer: With regard to stratified reporting by waste type, methodologies, baselines, and the monitoring of socio-economic, gender, and capacity-building impacts, these are not required at this stage. Should your Concept Note advance to the Full Proposal stage, you will be provided with the relevant guidance.
- Question: What environmental safeguards should be integrated for waste processing or recycling components? Is a gender action plan required at the concept note stage?

- Answer: Part D of the Concept Note Template covers the Environmental and Social Safeguards requirements for the Concept Note Stage. This document can be accessed [HERE](#). Should your Concept Note advance to the Full Proposal stage, you will be provided with the additional guidance on Environmental and Environmental and Social Safeguards.
- Question: Can circular economy initiatives that generate services such as:
 - transforming marine debris and waste shells into eco-construction materials for reef rehabilitation; and
 - establishing fee-based recycling and marine waste collection services;
 - developing eco-tourism experiences that reinvest profits into coral restoration, be considered valid and fundable approaches within the ACE Facility framework?
- Answer: The management of marine debris is aligned with the ACE Facility's priority scope. Projects are encouraged to take into account the 10 R-strategies for a circular economy. For additional guidance please refer to [ACE Facility Terms and Conditions](#) for Funding for Project Eligibility and project design preferences.
- Question: Would proposals that use circular systems as revenue-generation tools (e.g., upcycled marine products, composting of seagrass waste for local agriculture, or ocean-based educational services) qualify as acceptable outputs under the theme of circular economy as a service?
 - Answer: All ACE projects must demonstrate potential financial feasibility beyond the grant period. Proposals that use circular systems to support sustainable revenue generation are acceptable, provided they align with circular economy principles and long-term viability. Please note that organic waste streams, including sargassum, are not within the current scope of the ACE Facility, which focuses on solid waste management.
- Question: Can we consider post-hurricane recovery through circular economy interventions, such as repurposing marine debris into coastal barriers, reusing coral rubble for educational exhibits, and creating locally managed business models that fund long-term site maintenance?
 - Answer: The management of disaster debris is within the ACE Facility's priority thematic scope. For additional guidance please refer to [ACE Facility Terms and Conditions](#) for Funding for Project Eligibility and project design preferences.

- Question: Would regional knowledge exchange and service training for local conservation teams and youth groups, be considered an eligible activity to strengthen circular economy skills and service delivery capacity in small island contexts?
 - Answer: Activities that support knowledge generation, data collection, capacity building, and regional knowledge exchange on circular economy and marine pollution are eligible under the ACE Facility.

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
- Question: Our organization currently has a completed financial audit for one project covering the last two fiscal years, while audits for other projects are not yet available. Would this meet the minimum audit requirement to apply, or is it necessary to have institutional audits or multiple project audits completed before submission?
 - Answer: As part of the eligibility requirements, applicants are asked to submit audited financial statements for the two most recent fiscal years, prepared and signed by an independent external auditor. These should ideally be institutional audits rather than project-specific audits. Project audits alone—such as a single project audit covering two fiscal years—would not fully meet the minimum requirement unless your organization does not produce separate institutional audited financial statements. In such cases, you may provide the best available financial documentation, which can include Draft audited financial statements, and Management accounts. If institutional audits are not yet available, you should provide a brief explanation and submit the most complete set of financial documents you have.
- Question: Can you please clarify whether separate policies are required for each of 'Accounting; Procurement; Code of conduct, ethics, bribery & corruption', or whether we can provide multiple policies to cover an area?
 - Answer: You may submit multiple policies that collectively address the required areas (Accounting; Procurement; Code of Conduct, Ethics, Bribery & Corruption). A standalone policy for each category is not

mandatory, as long as the topics are clearly covered within your existing documents.

- Question: We are in the process of developing a formal Procurement Policy, and in the meantime we have a Process document that stands in lieu of a formal Policy. Would this suffice in the first instance?
 - Answer: If your organisation is currently finalizing one, you may submit your existing Procurement Process document for the initial stage. Please ensure it clearly outlines how procurement is managed within your organisation.
- Question: What financial documentation would be required for a biotechnology startup serving as either lead or implementation partner when the venture is pre-revenue?
 - Answer: As part of the eligibility requirements, applicants are asked to submit audited financial statements for the two most recent fiscal years, prepared and signed by an independent external auditor.

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.

- Question: For projects comprised of a consortium of organizations, should costs across all participating organizations be combined in each line item in the budget?
 - Answer: Applicants are encouraged to present a cost-effective budget aligned with an impactful project design. The allocation of funds across budget lines and activities is at the discretion of the applicant.
- Question: Could you please clarify if the audit costs must be included in the “Administrative Costs” budget line or is there another where they may be included instead?
 - Answer: Project audits are required. An allocation for auditing may be included under the administrative costs. This can be further streamlined should you advance to the Full Proposal Phase.
- Question: Can co-financing be provided by a partner of the applicant (e.g., a bank or a funding agency)?
 - Answer: Yes, there are no stipulations on who may serve as a co-financer.
- Question: Can you please confirm if the co-financing requirement of 25% for non-profit organizations is applied to the total value provided by CBF? For example, a project for which \$1,000,000 is financed by the CBF would have a co-financing requirement of \$250,000?
 - Answer: No. In cases where the lead organization is a non-profit entity (CBOs, academia, local and regional NGOs) the co-financing structure is calculated as follows: Total Grant Value = ACE Grant Value + Co-financing, where the co-financing must represent 25% of the Total Grant Value.
- Question: At what stage should the co-financing aspect be confirmed during the project proposal development process (at the concept note stage or during the full proposal development) by the applicant?
 - Answer: Applicants are required to identify proposed sources of co-financing in Part E of the Concept Note Application Template. It is acceptable to include both confirmed and anticipated co-financing at the Concept Note stage and to continue resource-mobilisation efforts during Full Proposal development, should your application advance.

- Question: Regarding co-financing, is it necessary to establish a separate dedicated account for managing these funds?
 - Answer: Successful applicants will be required to establish a designated bank account exclusively for the receipt of CBF resources for the project. In exceptional circumstances where this is not feasible, alternative arrangements may be considered.
- Question: Do the required documents for proof of co-financing have to come from the lead applicant or the co-financing donor?
 - Answer: A signed co-financing declaration must be submitted from each entity providing co-financing, whether this is the Lead Applicant itself, and/or an external donor or partner contributing to the co-financing. Each contributing entity must provide a letter on official letterhead confirming the amounts (cash and/or in-kind), stating the following:
“We have read and confirm that we commit to providing co-financing to the amount of (USD xxx cash and/or USD xxx in-kind) as detailed in this project proposal. We confirm that the co-financing can be mobilised according to the proposed timeline, considering a start date in Q2 of 2026”, with signature, name, position, place, and date.
- Question: We anticipate that we may be unable to meet the full co-financing requirement. Would the ACE Facility consider granting a waiver for the remaining portion of the co-financing contribution?
 - Answer: The required co-financing for organizations is a standard condition of the ACE Facility and cannot be waived. We encourage applicants to combine cash and in-kind contributions and to explore potential partnerships or additional sources to meet the co-financing threshold. We recognize that meeting the co-financing requirement can be challenging, but it is an essential part of ensuring project sustainability and demonstrating commitment to the intervention.

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.

Section 8: Project Timeline

- Question: Within what timeframe does the ACE Facility expect projects to demonstrate results or measurable progress?
 - Answer: Projects are expected to demonstrate results and measurable progress within the project timeframe, which is on average 2.5 years, with a maximum of 3 years.
- Question: Does ACE Facility anticipate extending the end-date for projects beyond August 2028?
 - Answer: The maximum duration for ACE-funded projects is three years to the date of the signed project agreement.