

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Gender Smart Facility Hub

Digital Learning Platform Development

Implementing Organisation	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF)
Project	Caribbean Organisations for a Resilient Environment (CORE)
Funding Partner	Global Affairs Canada (GAC)
Eligible Bidders	Web development firms, consultancy firms, or consortiums
Location	Remote / Flexible within the Caribbean region
Contract Duration	14 weeks from contract signing
Budget Range	USD \$17,000 – \$20,000
Submission Deadline	17 April 2026
Document Version	April 2026 Version 2.0

I. BACKGROUND

The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) is a regional environmental fund established in 2012, providing sustainable financing for conservation and climate resilience in the Caribbean. CBF manages three core programmes: Conservation Finance, Climate Change, and Nature-Based Economies (More information about the CBF can be found at <http://www.caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org>).

Through the CORE (Caribbean Organisations for a Resilient Environment) project — a CAD \$8 million initiative funded by Global Affairs Canada — CBF supports eight Caribbean territories via National Conservation Trust Funds (NCTFs), focusing on institutional capacity building, gender-responsive climate action, and biodiversity conservation, (More information about the CORE Project can be found at

<https://caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org/project/cbf-core-project/>)

A central CORE component is the Gender Smart Facility (GSF), distributing USD \$3 million in grants with 1:1 matched funding from GAC and the CBF Endowment. The GSF Hub will serve as the digital backbone of this facility: a focused knowledge-sharing and peer-learning platform for gender-responsive conservation across the Caribbean region.

CBF is seeking a qualified web development firm or consortium to design, build, and launch the GSF Hub platform in accordance with the specifications set out in this Terms of Reference.

II. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The GSF Hub will be a digital learning platform that mainstreams gender-responsive approaches in Caribbean biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

Specific Objectives

- Provide an accessible, user-friendly platform for knowledge sharing and capacity building among NCTFs and conservation practitioners
- Host a curated resource library of gender-responsive conservation tools, templates, and guidance documents
- Facilitate peer learning and networking across all eight CORE territories
- Establish a Gender Monitoring and Data Centre for regional data collection and visualisation
- Document and disseminate Gender Smart Facility implementation outcomes
- Deliver content in English, Spanish, and French to serve the full Caribbean region
- Assess user engagement of the GSF Hub to support monitoring, evaluation and learning outcomes.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected firm will design, develop, test, and launch the GSF Hub platform. The scope is divided into platform development, content migration, integrations, accessibility, and training.

A. Core Platform Infrastructure

The GSF Hub will be developed and hosted as a microsite within the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund's existing website ecosystem, similar to the BlueFin Hub (bluefinhub.org) which operates as a dedicated sub-platform under the CBF digital infrastructure. This approach ensures the GSF Hub benefits from CBF's established hosting environment, domain authority, and institutional web presence while maintaining its own distinct identity, navigation, and user experience as a specialised platform.

The selected firm must design and develop the GSF Hub to function as a self-contained microsite that is visually and functionally distinct from the main CBF website, while using similar WordPress infrastructure and hosting environment. The platform must be modular and extensible to accommodate future growth beyond the CORE project period.

Core infrastructure requirements:

- Custom WordPress development as a microsite within the CBF website architecture, with its own navigation, branding, and user experience distinct from the main CBF site
- Responsive design optimised for variable bandwidth conditions across Caribbean territories
- Secure, reliable hosting within CBF's existing hosting environment with a minimum 99.9% uptime guarantee
- SSL certificate, automated backups, firewall, and malware scanning
- Role-based Content Management System (CMS) with user registration and management
- Full-text search across all platform content

- CDN implementation for improved regional loading performance

B. Resource Library

- Searchable repository of gender-responsive conservation tools, templates, policies, and guidance documents
- Organisation by theme, territory, and conservation type
- Support for PDF, video, and infographic formats
- Download tracking and analytics
- Photo and media gallery with attribution and photo credit fields
- Offline resource package capability for low-connectivity contexts

C. Interactive Learning Modules

A core function of the GSF Hub is to host and deliver structured learning courses that build the capacity of NCTFs and conservation practitioners to integrate gender-responsive approaches into their work. These courses have been developed under the CORE project using dedicated course development software **Articulate 360** and are currently hosted on an external platform. The GSF Hub must serve as the permanent home for these courses, providing a seamless and accessible learning experience for users across all eight Caribbean territories.

The selected firm will be responsible for migrating existing course content onto the GSF Hub platform, ensuring that the course structure, multimedia elements, quizzes, and assessments are preserved and function correctly within the WordPress environment. CBF will provide the course files and any necessary technical documentation to support this migration.

The interactive learning modules cover gender integration across conservation contexts, including but not limited to:

- Protected area management
- Climate adaptation planning
- Community-based conservation
- Marine and coastal resource management

Platform functionality for learning modules:

- Migration and hosting of existing course content developed under the CORE project, with full preservation of course structure, multimedia, and interactive elements.
- Self-paced module delivery with clear, structured learning pathways that guide users through content in a logical sequence.
- Progress tracking for registered users, enabling learners to resume where they left off across sessions and devices.
- Quiz and assessment functionality integrated within modules to reinforce learning and measure comprehension.
- Certificate generation capability upon successful course completion.

- Mobile-responsive module design that functions effectively on smartphones and tablets, recognising that many Caribbean practitioners access content primarily via mobile devices.
- Compatibility with future course additions, allowing CBF to upload new learning modules as they are developed without requiring developer support.

D. Case Study Database

- Documented examples from Gender Smart Facility grantees and NCTF initiatives
- Gender-disaggregated outcome data presentation
- Filter and search by territory, conservation type, and thematic outcome
- Visual data presentation using charts and infographics

E. Expert Directory

- Searchable database of gender specialists, women conservation leaders, technical experts, and CUSO alumni
- Profile pages showing expertise areas, territories, and languages
- Filter functionality by expertise, location, and language

F. Peer Learning Forum

- Moderated discussion spaces for NCTFs to share questions and solutions
- Topic-based organisation with a notification system
- Content moderation tools for platform administrators

G. Gender Monitoring & Data Centre

- Dashboard displaying regional gender outcomes with data visualisation tools
- Upload functionality for NCTFs to submit gender-disaggregated data using standardised templates
- Report generation and export capability (CSV, PDF)
- Privacy controls and data security for sensitive submissions
- Integration with CORE MEAL reporting frameworks

H. Newsletter and Communication

- Mailchimp integration for newsletter distribution and subscription management
- Newsletter archive section on the platform
- Template system for consistent formatting across editions
- Scheduling capability for future releases

I. Webinar Integration

- Events calendar with registration functionality
- Integration with Zoom or equivalent webinar platform
- Searchable recording archive with tagging
- Automatic notification system for registered participants

J. Technical Requirements

Accessibility

- WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliance
- Screen reader compatibility and keyboard navigation support
- Alt text for all images, adjustable text size, and high-contrast mode

Multi-language Support

- English, Spanish, and French language versions
- Translation management system with language switcher
- Automatic content matching across languages

Performance

- Page load time under 3 seconds across desktop and mobile environments
- Mobile-responsive design across all device types and screen sizes
- Implementation of server-side and browser caching
- Image optimization including compression, next-gen formats such as WebP, and lazy loading.

Search Engine Optimization

- Clean, SEO-friendly URL structure
- Customizable meta titles and meta descriptions per page
- Proper heading hierarchy using H1 through H6 tags
- XML sitemap generation and submission
- Google Analytics 4 integration
- Google Search Console integration

Security and Compliance

- Two-factor authentication for admin users
- Role-based access control
- Data encryption for sensitive information
- GDPR compliance
- Regular security updates and patch management

IV. DELIVERABLES

Design Phase

- UX wireframes for all major pages and user flows
- Visual design mock-ups aligned with CBF branding and GAC visibility requirements
- Mobile-responsive design mock-ups
- Interactive prototype for CBF review and user testing
- Design system documentation (colours, typography, components)

Development Phase

- Fully functional GSF Hub platform with all specified features
- Configured CMS with role-based access control
- All technical integrations completed and tested (Mailchimp, Zoom/webinar, Analytics)
- Initial content migration from existing CORE materials
- User acceptance testing with CBF team and NCTF beta group

Testing and Launch

- Quality assurance test report covering cross-browser, mobile, and accessibility
- Performance optimisation and security audit reports
- Phased launch: soft launch with CORE partners followed by full public launch
- Post-launch bug fixes and adjustments (30-day warranty period)

Documentation and Training

- Administrator manual and user guide for NCTFs
- Technical documentation for future developers
- Minimum 3 live training sessions for the CBF team
- Recorded tutorial videos for common CMS tasks
- Content submission guidelines for NCTF partners

V. TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

Total project duration: 14 weeks from contract signing. The following milestone schedule applies. Each phase includes a structured review and approval cycle to ensure deliverables meet CBF's requirements before the project advances to the next stage.

Review and Approval Process

A consistent review and approval process applies at every milestone throughout the project. At the end of each phase, the developer will submit deliverables to CBF for review. A designated CBF Focus Group

comprising the Communications Officer, DEIJ Officer, MEAL Officer, and Project Lead will review all deliverables and provide consolidated written feedback within 5 business days of submission.

The developer must formally acknowledge receipt of this feedback and provide a written response confirming how each item will be addressed. Revisions must then be implemented and resubmitted for CBF verification. CBF will confirm in writing that all feedback has been satisfactorily incorporated before the project may proceed to the next phase. No phase may commence without a written CBF sign-off on the preceding milestone.

Milestone Schedule

Period	Phase	Key Activities
Weeks 1–2	Discovery & Planning	<p>Kickoff meeting with CBF Focus Group; requirements refinement; content and course audit; technical specifications finalisation; microsite architecture planning within CBF website ecosystem.</p> <p>Review: Developer submits technical specifications and project plan for Focus Group review and written approval before design commences.</p>
Weeks 3–5	Design (Milestone 1)	<p>UX wireframes and visual mockups for all major pages and user flows; mobile-responsive design mockups; interactive prototype; GAC visibility compliance review; design system documentation.</p> <p>Review: Focus Group reviews all design deliverables. The developer acknowledges feedback in writing, implements revisions, and resubmits. CBF confirms all changes are satisfactorily incorporated before development begins.</p>
Weeks 6–10	Development (Milestone 2)	<p>Core platform build within CBF microsite environment; feature implementation; course content migration from existing platform; content migration from CORE materials; integration setup (Mailchimp, Zoom, Analytics); Gender Monitoring Centre development.</p> <p>Mid-development check-in (Week 8): Developer presents progress to Focus Group for interim feedback on functionality and course migration fidelity.</p> <p>Review: Focus Group reviews completed development. The developer acknowledges feedback, implements revisions, and resubmits for written CBF approval before testing begins.</p>

Weeks 11–12	Testing (Milestone 3)	<p>Quality assurance testing (cross-browser, mobile, accessibility); user acceptance testing with CBF Focus Group and NCTF beta testers from participating territories; course module testing to verify learning pathways, quizzes, and certificate generation; bug fixes and performance optimisation.</p> <p>Review: Focus Group and NCTF beta group submit consolidated testing feedback. The developer acknowledges all items, implements fixes, and resubmits. CBF confirms resolution before launch preparation begins.</p>
Weeks 13–14	Launch Preparation (Milestone 4)	<p>Minimum 3 training sessions for CBF team; administrator manual and user guide delivery; technical documentation handover; recorded tutorial videos for CMS tasks; soft launch with CORE partners; final adjustments based on soft launch feedback.</p> <p>Review: Focus Group conducts final review of live platform, documentation, and training materials. The developer addresses any remaining items. CBF provides a written sign-off for full public launch.</p>
Post-launch	Support (30 days)	<p>Bug fixes and troubleshooting; performance monitoring; user feedback collection and resolution. Response times for critical issues must be defined in the consultant’s proposal.</p>

Note: Bidders should account for these review periods in their proposed work plans and ensure adequate time is allocated for revisions at each stage.

VI. BUDGET

The total budget envelope for this assignment is USD \$17,000 – \$20,000. Proposals should provide a clear breakdown by deliverable. The following indicative allocation is provided for reference:

Budget Line	Indicative Range (USD)
Platform development, CMS, infrastructure, and all integrations completed and approved.	\$13,000 – \$14,000
Content architecture, taxonomy, and migration support completed.	\$2,000 – \$3,000
Year 1 hosting, SSL, security, and technical support completed and approved.	\$2,000 – \$3,000
Training (minimum 3 sessions), documentation, and tutorials completed and approved.	Included

Total**\$17,000 – \$20,000**

Payment will be structured across four milestones: 30% on contract signing; 40% on design approval; 20% on development completion; 10% on successful launch and client acceptance.

VII. GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA VISIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The GSF Hub is funded through the CORE project by Global Affairs Canada. Full compliance with GAC Visual Identity Guidelines for International Assistance Partners is mandatory and non-negotiable. GAC guidelines will be provided to the selected firm before design commencement.

Minimum Visibility Requirements

- Government of Canada partnership acknowledgement prominently featured in the platform header or footer on all pages
- Canada Wordmark and bilingual credit line ("In partnership with Canada / En partenariat avec le Canada") present in all platform templates
- GAC-approved colour palette and visual identity elements integrated into design where applicable
- All newsletter templates, webinar materials, downloadable resources, and case studies must include GAC partnership recognition
- Social media content promoting the platform must include appropriate GAC credit

Compliance Process

- All design mock-ups must be reviewed by CBF for GAC compliance before development begins
- CBF will provide approved acknowledgement text in English, French, and Spanish
- Examples of compliant materials will be shared with the selected firm

VIII. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Mandatory Requirements

- Minimum 5 years of experience in website and digital platform development
- Proven expertise in custom WordPress development
- Portfolio demonstrating at least two comparable learning platforms, knowledge hubs, or resource repositories
- Demonstrated experience with multi-language website implementation
- Working knowledge of WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards
- Experience with API integrations (email marketing, analytics, webinar platforms)
- Knowledge of GDPR and data security best practices

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience with international development, NGO, or conservation sector clients
- Understanding of Caribbean connectivity constraints and offline access needs
- Experience with donor visibility requirements (GAC, EU, UN or similar)
- Familiarity with data dashboard and visualisation development

Team Composition

Proposals must clearly identify key personnel, including: Project Manager, UX/UI Designer, WordPress Developer(s), Quality Assurance Tester, and estimated hours per team member.

IX. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Technical Proposal

- Demonstrated understanding of project objectives and Caribbean context
- Proposed methodology and technology stack
- Content migration strategy
- Quality assurance process
- Detailed work plan with milestones and task breakdown
- Team composition with CVs for key personnel
- Minimum 3 portfolio examples with at least one learning platform and one data dashboard
- Client references with contact information (minimum 2)
- Proposed hosting solution, security measures, and scalability approach

Financial Proposal

- Itemised budget breakdown by deliverable
- Clear assumptions and exclusions
- Post-launch support and maintenance cost options
- Presented in USD

Submission Format

- All proposals in English
- Technical and financial proposals submitted as separate PDF documents
- Company registration and tax compliance documents

X. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be assessed by a selection committee using the following weighted criteria. Minimum qualifying score is 70%.

Criterion	Weight	Score (0–5)
Technical Approach and Methodology — understanding of requirements, proposed solutions, innovation, QA process	30%	
Relevant Experience and Portfolio — quality and relevance of examples, team expertise, client references	25%	
Cost and Value for Money — competitive pricing, clarity of breakdown, transparency of assumptions	20%	
Timeline and Project Management — realistic schedule, clear milestones, resource allocation	15%	
GAC Compliance Understanding — demonstrated knowledge of visibility requirements	10%	

XI. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- All deliverables become the property of CBF upon final payment. Consultant may showcase work in portfolio with prior written approval from CBF.
- A non-disclosure agreement is required. All project information, content, and data are confidential.
- The consultant provides a 30-day warranty covering bug fixes after official launch. Response times for critical issues must be defined in the proposal.
- Change requests outside the agreed scope require written approval and will be quoted separately.
- CBF reserves the right to negotiate terms with the selected firm, request clarifications, or reject all proposals without obligation.

XII. SUBMISSION AND CONTACT

Submission Deadline	5pm AST, Friday, 17 April 2026
Submit To	procurement@caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org
Email Subject Line	GSF Hub Development Proposal – [Lead Consultant Name]
Questions Deadline	N/A
Contact Person	Procurement Officer
Briefing Session	N/A