CARIBBEAN BIODIVERSITY FUND (CBF)

Call for Proposals

Integrated Study on Gender Finance Solutions and Gender Transformative Business Models

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Assignment Title	Integrated Study on Inclusive and Gender-Responsive (IGR) Financial Mechanisms and Gender Transformative Business Models, including Five (5) Case Studies
Contracting Entity	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) — Conservation Finance Programme
Project	Caribbean Organizations for a Resilient Environment (CORE), financed by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) with co-financing from the CBF
Type of Contract	Firm-level consultancy
Budget	USD $35,000
Duration	Six (6) months: October 2026 – March 2027
Geographic Scope	The eight CORE countries (Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname), the wider Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada
Reporting To	CORE Technical Coordinator, with technical oversight by the CBF Gender Specialist
CfP Due Date	11th September 2026, at 5:00PM AST Email submission to: procurement@caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org Subject line: CORE Gender Research

1. Background

The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) is a regional environmental fund established in 2012 with the mission to ensure continuous funding for conservation and sustainable development in the Caribbean. Through its Conservation Finance Programme and its mechanism called the Caribbean Sustainable Finance Architecture (CSFA), the CBF channels financial resources to a network of partner National Conservation Trust Funds (NCTFs), which in turn fund conservation projects at the national level.

The Caribbean Organizations for a Resilient Environment (CORE) Project is financed by Global Affairs Canada (GAC), with co-financing from the CBF, and is implemented by the CBF in partnership with Cuso International. The objective of CORE is increased resilience of Caribbean communities, particularly vulnerable women, to the impacts of climate change. CORE works across three pillars (a) Institutional Capacity Building, (b) Grant-Making, and (c) Collaboration/Networking. This is aligned with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), particularly Action Area 1 (Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls), Action Area 3 (Growth that Works for Everyone), and Action Area 4 (Environment and Climate Action). CORE's beneficiary countries are Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.

A centrepiece of the project is the Gender Smart Facility (GSF), a grant-making mechanism through which NCTFs deploy grant funding to environmental organizations (EOs) and women's organizations (WOs) for inclusive and gender-responsive (IGR) nature-based climate solutions (NbCS), ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), and circular economy (CE) initiatives. CORE also supports regional knowledge exchange and coordination through the GSF Hub, an IGR biodiversity conservation and climate change resilience learning platform.

Under Immediate Outcome 1210 (Improved knowledge and skills of CBF, NCTFs and regional environmental or women's organizations to design sustainable, IGR financial mechanisms that increase access of women to biodiversity and climate funds), Output 1214 commits the project to generating and sharing expertise, knowledge, and good practices to strengthen long-term IGR biodiversity and climate change financing. This Terms of Reference (TOR) supports Activity 1214.1 "'Ensure inclusion of NbCS IGR financial mechanisms session at CBF regional events, but specifically covers two activities under that output:

- Activity 1214.2: Conduct a Gender Finance Solutions research study on IGR financial mechanisms promoting IGR climate/environment initiatives; and
- Activity 1214.3: Conduct a Gender Transformative Business Models research study in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada.

The development of financial mechanisms for conservation and climate action with a gender lens remains relatively new for the CBF's CSFA. This assignment is intended to shorten the learning curve and reduce trial-and-error by generating rigorous, practice-oriented research on (i) successful IGR financial mechanisms that include women in climate and conservation interventions, and (ii) gender-transformative business models across the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada. Findings will inform CBF, NCTF, and GSF programming; feed the GSF Hub as knowledge products; and support engagement with regional platforms and partners, including the OECS, CARICOM, UN Women, ECLAC, and RedLAC.

2. Objectives of the Consultancy

The overall objective of the consultancy is to produce an integrated body of research and knowledge products on gender finance solutions and gender-transformative business models that strengthens the capacity of the CBF, NCTFs, and environmental organizations to design, finance, and scale IGR climate and environment initiatives across the Caribbean.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify, map, and analyse IGR financial mechanisms (e.g., grant facilities, blended finance, concessional credit, micro-finance, guarantees, revolving funds, results-based finance, impact investments, and gender-lens investing instruments) that have effectively promoted gender-responsive climate, biodiversity, and environment initiatives, with attention to design features, eligibility, and access conditions for women and WOs, safeguards, and results.
2. Identify and analyse gender-transformative business models in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada - including women-led enterprises in EbA, circular economy, and nature-based value chains - that shift underlying gender norms, decision-making power, income control, and market access rather than merely including women as participants.
3. Develop five (5) high-quality case studies suitable for regional knowledge sharing through the GSF Hub, CBF regional events, and partner platforms in alignment with CORE's Performance Measurement Framework.
4. Distilled practical, actionable recommendations for the CBF, NCTFs, the GSF, EOs and WOs on adopting, adapting, and financing the documented solutions and models within the CSFA.
5. Contribute baseline evidence for CORE's monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) on IGR financial mechanisms, consistent with the CORE Gender Strategy and MEAL Framework.

3. Scope of Work

The assignment merges the two research streams into a single, coherent study with a shared methodology, an integrated report, and a common case study framework. The Consultant is expected to deliver the following components:

Component A: Gender Finance Solutions Research Stream (Activity 1214.2)

- Conduct a structured desk review and landscape mapping of IGR financial mechanisms promoting gender-responsive climate and environment initiatives, drawing on regional and international experience, with the Caribbean as the priority lens.
- Analyse the enabling conditions, governance arrangements, gender safeguards, capitalization strategies, and sustainability pathways of the mechanisms identified, including barriers faced by women and WOs in accessing climate and biodiversity finance.
- Assess the relevance and transferability of documented solutions to the CSFA, the GSF, and NCTF grant-making, referencing lessons emerging from GSF implementation to date.
- Identify design and operational recommendations for strengthening women's access to biodiversity and climate funds through IGR financial mechanisms.

Component B: Gender Transformative Business Models Research Stream (Activity 1214.3)

- Conduct a structured desk review and mapping of gender-transformative business models in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada, with emphasis on models relevant to EbA, circular economy, natural resource-based livelihoods, and community-based conservation enterprise.
- Apply a clear analytical distinction between gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, and gender-transformative approaches, consistent with the definitions in the CORE Gender Strategy, and assess how the documented models shift decision-making authority, income control, governance representation, and market access for women.
- Analyse business viability, financing pathways, and scalability of the models identified, including their interaction with the financial mechanisms examined under Component A.
- Identify opportunities for Canadian and Latin American models and partnerships (including impact investors and gender-lens finance actors) to be adapted to, or connected with, Caribbean contexts.

Component C: Case Studies (Five)

The Consultant will develop five (5) case studies for knowledge sharing, selected jointly with the CORE PMU based on transparent criteria proposed at inception. The recommended distribution is a minimum of three (3) case studies from the Caribbean (of which at least one should document a GSF-financed or NCTF-linked experience, where feasible), one (1) from Latin America, and one (1) from Canada. Across the set, the case studies should cover both research streams i.e., at least two IGR financial mechanisms and at least two gender-transformative business models. Each case study will:

- Follow a common template agreed at inception (context; description of the mechanism/model; gender-transformative features; results and evidence; financing; challenges; lessons learned; replicability in the Caribbean);
- Be based on a combination of documentation review and primary data collection (key informant interviews and, where feasible and budgeted, virtual, or in-person consultations); and
- Be produced as a standalone, visually formatted knowledge product (maximum 8–10 pages each) suitable for publication on the GSF Hub and dissemination at regional events in both English and Spanish/Dutch.

Component D: Validation, Knowledge Sharing, and Finalization

- Design and facilitate one (1) virtual validation session with the CORE, CBF, NCTFs, and selected stakeholders to review the draft findings and case studies;
- Prepare a consolidated feedback matrix and incorporate agreed revisions into the final products;
- Produce a policy and practice brief (maximum 8 pages) and a summary PowerPoint deck; and
- Deliver one (1) webinar or presentation of findings at a CBF regional event or GSF Hub session, as coordinated with the CORE PMU.

4. Methodology

The Consultant is expected to propose a detailed methodology in its technical proposal and refine it during inception. At minimum, the methodology should include:

- A mixed-methods design combining desk review, landscape mapping, key informant interviews, and case study methods, with triangulation across sources.
- An analytical framework grounded in recognized gender analysis approaches (e.g., Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), the gender integration continuum from gender-blind to gender-transformative, and gender-responsive budgeting concepts), consistent with the CORE Gender Strategy and FIAP.
- Collection and use of sex- and diversity-disaggregated data wherever available, applying an intersectional lens (e.g., age, ethnicity, Indigenous identity, disability, rurality).
- Ethical research protocols, including informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, and do-no-harm principles, particularly when engaging grassroots organizations and community respondents; and
- Stakeholder engagement that is inclusive and gender-responsive, coordinated through the CORE PMU and NCTFs, and respectful of respondents’ time and capacity constraints.

Primary data collection is expected to be conducted principally through virtual means. Any proposed travel must be justified, costed within the financial proposal, and approved in advance by the CBF.

5. Deliverables and Indicative Schedule

All deliverables must be submitted in English, in editable electronic format (Microsoft Word/PowerPoint) plus PDF and are subject to review and written approval by the CORE PMU. The CBF will provide consolidated comments within ten (10) working days of each submission.

D1	Inception Report and Detailed Work Plan	Refined methodology and analytical framework; detailed work plan and timeline; stakeholder engagement and data collection plan; proposed case study selection criteria and longlist of candidate financial mechanisms and business models; research ethics and data protection protocols.	2 Weeks after contract signing
D2	Desk Review and Landscape Mapping Report	Consolidated desk review covering (i) IGR financial mechanisms promoting gender-responsive climate and environment initiatives, and (ii) gender-transformative business models in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada; annotated inventory/mapping of mechanisms and models; shortlist of case study candidates for validation with the CORE PMU.	6 Weeks after contract signing
D3	Draft Integrated Research Report and Five (5) Draft Case Studies	Draft integrated report presenting findings from both research streams, comparative analysis, and preliminary recommendations for the CBF, NCTFs, and the GSF; five draft case studies (recommended distribution: three Caribbean, one Latin America, one Canada) in an agreed knowledge-product template.	16 Weeks after contract signing
D4	Validation Workshop and Feedback Matrix	Design, facilitation, and reporting of a virtual validation workshop with CBF, NCTFs, and selected EOs, WOs and regional partners; consolidated comments/feedback matrix showing how stakeholder and PMU inputs will be addressed.	20 Weeks after contract signing

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D5	Final Research Report, Final Case Studies, and Knowledge Products	Final integrated research report incorporating all feedback guided by GaC CORE’s communications strategy and branding guidelines; five finalized standalone case studies formatted for the GSF Hub in English; a policy and practice brief (max. 8 pages); a PowerPoint summary deck; and delivery of one webinar or regional event presentation of findings.	24 Weeks after contract signing

Indicative Work Schedule

[redacted]	[redacted]
September 2026	Contract signing; inception meeting with the CORE PMU; refinement of methodology; submission of Inception Report (D1).
October 2026	Desk review and landscape mapping of IGR financial mechanisms and gender-transformative business models; development of data collection instruments; submission of Desk Review and Landscape Mapping Report (D2); agreement on final five case studies.
November 2026 – January 2027	Primary data collection (key informant interviews, surveys, and virtual/field consultations as feasible); comparative analysis; drafting of integrated report and five case studies; submission of drafts (D3).
February 2027	Virtual validation workshop with CBF, NCTFs, EOs, WOs, and regional partners; consolidation of feedback (D4).
February 2027	Finalization of report, case studies, policy and practice brief, and presentation materials; 1 webinar or regional event presentation; submission of all final products (D5) and consultancy close-out.

6. Duration and Level of Effort

The consultancy will be executed over a period of six (6) months, from October 2026 to March 2027. The Consultant should propose a level of effort and team deployment plan sufficient to deliver the scope described above, indicating the number of person-days per team member per deliverable. The assignment is home-based/virtual, with any travel subject to prior written approval by the CBF.

7. Management, Reporting, and Coordination

The Consultant will report to the CORE Technical Coordinator, with day-to-day technical oversight and quality assurance provided by the CBF Gender Specialist. The CORE PMU will facilitate introductions to NCTFs, EOs, WOs, GSF grantees, and regional partners; provide relevant project documentation (including the CORE Project Implementation Plan, the Updated Gender Strategy (2025), the GSF Manual, the CORE Baseline Study, CORE Resource Mobilization Strategy and Plan (RMS&P) and the MEAL Framework); and coordinate the validation workshop logistics jointly with the Consultant.

The Consultant will participate in a virtual inception meeting, brief monthly progress check-ins, and ad hoc coordination calls as required. All findings, recommendations, and knowledge products must be consistent with the CORE Gender Strategy, the CBF Gender Policy, and FIAP principles.

8. Qualifications and Team Composition

The assignment is open to consulting firms. The lead firm should demonstrate:

- At least seven (7) years of institutional experience in gender and development research, gender-lens investing, climate/conservation finance, or relevant related fields;
- Evidence of comparable multi-country research assignments, including published climate finance research reports and case studies for international development or environmental finance clients;
- Demonstrated knowledge of the Caribbean context; working experience in Latin America and familiarity with the Canadian gender-lens finance and impact investing landscape will be considered strong assets; and
- Demonstrated capacity to conduct research in Spanish and/or Dutch, in addition to English, is an asset given the geographic scope (including Suriname and Latin America).

Proposed Key Personnel (minimum)

Team Leader — Gender and Climate/Conservation Finance Specialist: Advanced degree (master’s or higher) in gender and development studies, economics, environmental management, finance, or a related field; at least ten (10) years of experience in gender-responsive programming and/or climate, biodiversity, or conservation finance; demonstrated experience leading multi-country research; strong analytical writing skills in English.

Research Specialist — Gender Transformative Approaches and Business Models: Advanced degree in a relevant field; at least seven (7) years of experience in gender analysis, women’s economic empowerment, enterprise development, or inclusive value chains; demonstrated experience applying the gender integration continuum and intersectional analysis.

Regional Researcher(s): At least five (5) years of relevant experience; combined coverage of the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada; language capability appropriate to the case study locations proposed.

The Consultant may propose additional team members (e.g., a knowledge products/communications specialist for case study design and layout). CVs of all proposed key personnel must be included in the technical proposal, and key personnel may **NOT** be substituted without the prior written approval of the CBF.

9. Payment Schedule

The budget for this exercise is **USD $35,000**, all inclusive. Payments will be made in tranches upon written approval of deliverables by the CORE PMU, as follows:

Payment 1 — 15%	Upon approval of Deliverable 1 (Inception Report)
Payment 2 — 20%	Upon approval of Deliverable 2 (Desk Review and Landscape Mapping Report)
Payment 3 — 30%	Upon approval of Deliverable 3 (Draft Report and Draft Case Studies)
Payment 4 — 35%	Upon approval of Deliverables 4 and 5 (Final Report, Case Studies, Webinar and Knowledge Products)

10. Application and Evaluation

Interested firms should submit the following documents in English to the following address procurement@caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org with Subject Line: “Proposal – CORE Gender Research Consultancy”:

1. A technical proposal (maximum 15 pages, excluding annexes) presenting the firm’s understanding of the assignment, the proposed methodology and analytical framework, the case study selection strategy, the work plan, and the team composition with roles;
2. Firm’s /consortium profile(s) and at least two (2) examples of comparable work, with references;
3. CVs of all key personnel; and
4. A financial proposal in United States Dollars (USD) inclusive of all professional fees, taxes, and any proposed travel and workshop-related costs, presented as a fixed-price budget broken down by deliverable.

Applications shall be submitted by **11 September 2026, 5:00 PM AST**. Late submissions will be automatically eliminated.

Proposals will be evaluated using a quality- and cost-based method as follows:

Criterion	Weight (%)
Technical approach and methodology, including case study strategy and understanding of the assignment	30
Qualifications and experience of the firm/consortium in gender-responsive climate and conservation finance research	25
Qualifications and experience of proposed key personnel (Team Leader and specialists)	25
Regional experience across the Caribbean, Latin America, and Canada	5
Language capability (English and Spanish)	5
Financial proposal (value for money)	10

Cleared by:

C.Chambers-Johnson

Cordia Chambers-Johnson

CBF DEIJ Officer – Conservation Finance

Tanja Lieuw

CBF Program Manager – Conservation Finance